



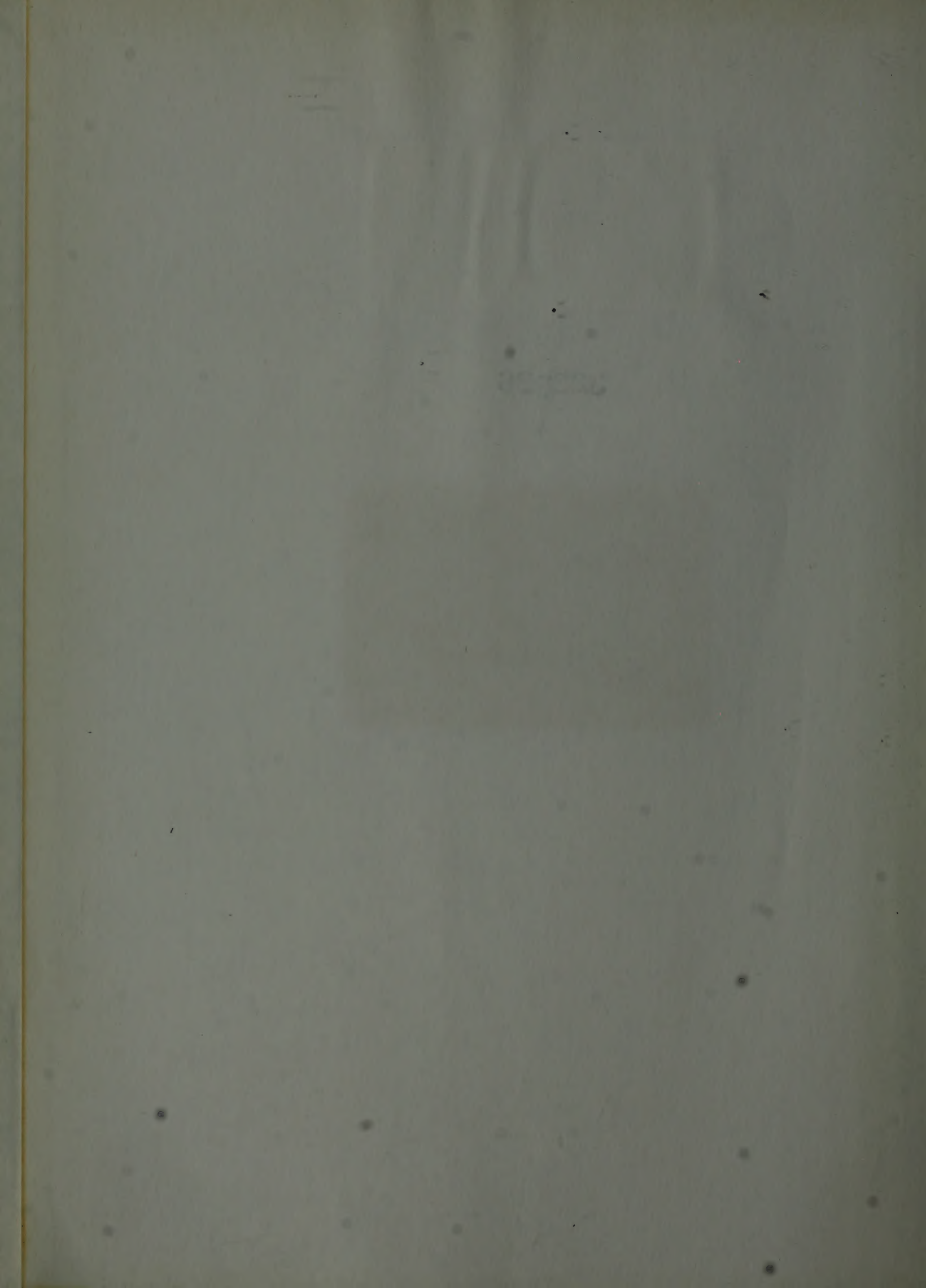
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by Tom Bethell







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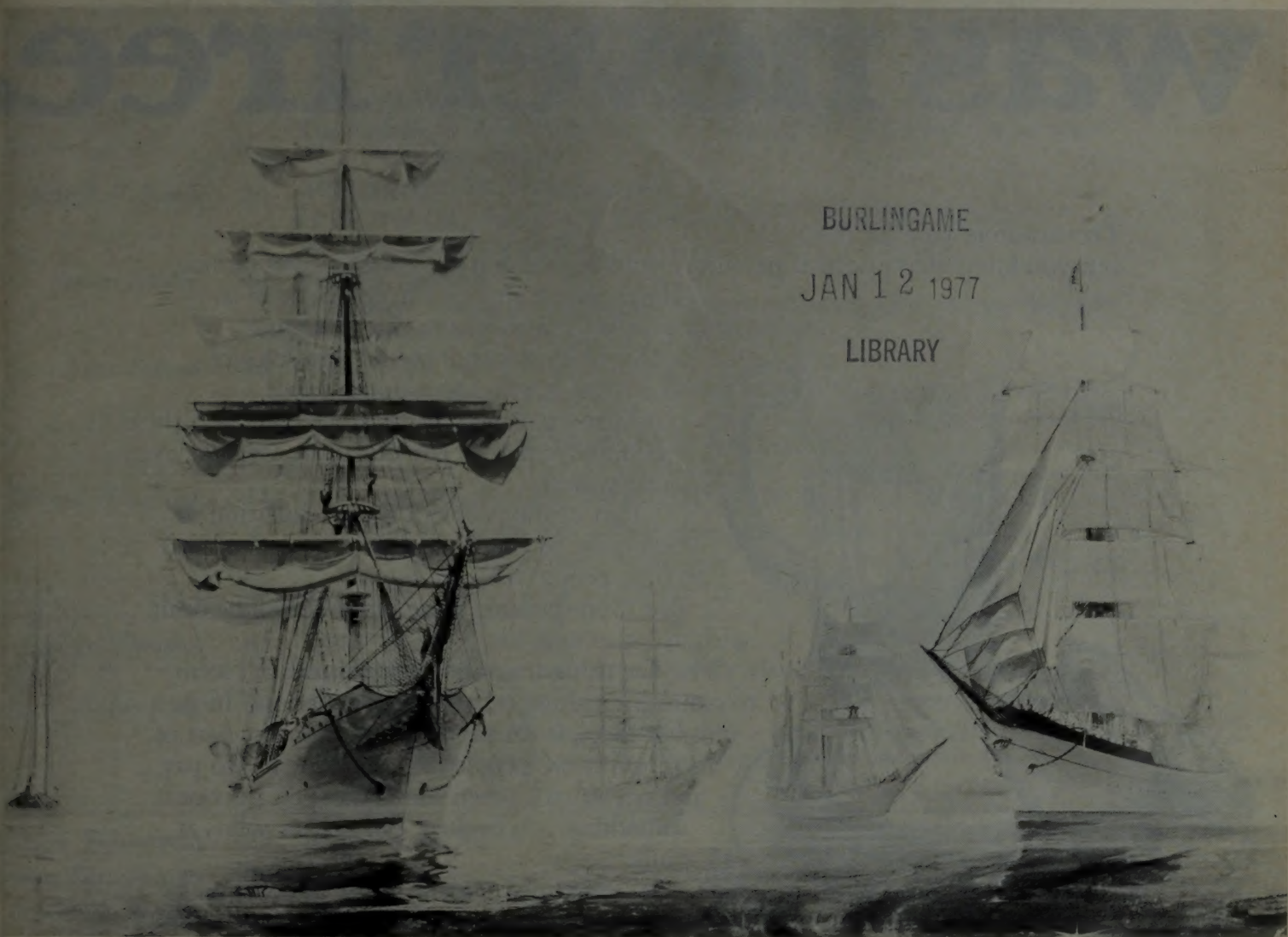
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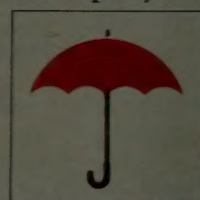
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**THE TRAVELERS**



# Harper's

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Published monthly by Harper's Magazine Company, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, a division of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. John Cowles, Jr., Chairman; Otto A. Silha, President; Donald R. Dwight, Publisher; Charles W. Arnason, Secretary; William R. Beattie, Treasurer. Subscriptions: \$8.97 one year. Foreign except Canada and Pan America: \$1.50 per year additional. For advertising information contact Harper-Atlantic Sales, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Other offices in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Copyright © 1976 by the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. All rights reserved. The trademark *Harper's* is used by Harper's Magazine Company under license, and is a registered trademark owned by Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated. Printed in the U.S.A. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send Form 3579 to Harper's Magazine, 1255 Portland Place, Boulder, Colo. 80302



# LETTERS

## Onward and upward

Can a "token woman" respond to Veronica Geng's article "Requiem for the Women's Movement" in the November *Harper's*?

Calling my appointment a token one is unfair to the Federal Reserve Board, which made an exhaustive five months' talent search before deciding on it, because they wanted to be certain they had the best-qualified candidate. Calling the job a "token" one is simply inaccurate. I am in full command of the division which drafts and administers the consumer credit regulations for which the board is responsible—one of the most sensitive and difficult areas the board deals with. I succeeded a man, and my opposite numbers at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation are men.

Miss Geng may have meant to imply that the appointment was a sop intended to quiet the demand for more professional opportunities for women. This supposition is inconsistent with the facts. Rather, it is part of a very real trend at the board—and elsewhere in the federal government—over the past ten years. As of the end of October, there were twenty-five professionals in my division, twelve of whom are women. Their grades and pay are comparable with the grades and pay of the men, and their responsibilities are the same.

I can understand the disappointment and frustration Miss Geng feels. Women have been helped into prominence by the women's movement and have then turned around and said, "I've

made it. Now, don't rock the boat by demanding more!" Women compete with other women, just as men do with other men. Any serious student of history will recognize and could have predicted the problems the women's movement is having. Similar problems are common to other evangelical movements. But if pronouncements of defeat are issued on the basis of unverified facts, the women who led the movement risk damaging younger women who trust them.

The most profound concern of professional women of my generation who are in government service is that many young women still doubt themselves and still don't commit themselves to competing in the outside world (if that is what they want to do) in the way men do as a matter of course. An article which tells them that the only results of all the struggle of the past few years are a few token appointments, can tip the scales.

Yes, do criticize and analyze the women's movement and women's position in the world. But don't tell the young and uncommitted that nothing has happened, that it is of no use to struggle. There are women in my generation who know it can be done.

JANET HART  
Director

Division of Consumer Affairs  
Board of Governors of the  
Federal Reserve System  
Washington, D.C.

In publishing a work which evolved from the convoluted Redstockings "Feminist Revolution" you give a forum to an element on the lunatic fringe of the women's liberation movement.

Robin Morgan has referred to this kind of paper as "more-radical-than-thou" politics. What I clearly see is a simple matter of a few of the founding radical sisters straining to keep the mammoth movement under their narrow guidance. The movement is now in the public domain and will be subject to all the extremes associated with human interpretation.

Any woman who would pit de Beauvoir against Friedan, or call the 1975 *Woman's Survival Sourcebook* mere "busyness" is intent on chanting her own one-note requiem. I, for one, refuse to join in her attention-getting effort. Miss Geng loads her piece with the garbled rhetoric she professes to abhor. Women are now more aware of the subtle as well as obvious patriarchal pressures put upon them by men and by women who blindly accept the mores of cruel and unjust men. Every woman who lives with a man knows what an effort true self-liberation is. Miss Geng (together with Sarachild) stands apart and judges the many and varied interpretations of women's liberation. We see this same sterile eye in Marxist and socialist writers—the clawing for power at the top, the refusal to let the people truly take control through trial and error.

It is happening now and there is not one thing *Harper's* can do to weaken the decision of women to take a valid place in the world, regardless of the risk.

SHARRON BELSON  
Manchester, Mo.

Miss Geng has come a long way through the fogbank of illusion generated by our fragmented society, and



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## LETTERS

she is to be congratulated in her drive to push to the light and stop at nothing less. Yet her account of the women's movement is strangely vague as to viewpoint. This lack of awareness of basic assumptions I find to be the crux, not only of her article, but of the movement of which she writes.

What has happened here, as in all so-called radical politics, is that straw (pardon the expression) men have been erected, and reams of invective launched against them. Made of straw, they fall with difficulty, for, were they to fall, the reaction which exists to oppose them would also fall. Those fragmented women who would die for power are no longer able to fool some of the women some of the time, and more and more former devotees are catching glimpses of the illusions to which they would have been sacrificed.

*Equality, male-domination, sex-role*—such wonderfully magical words are coming to be seen as just words. Miss Geng, as others, has suffered traumas in discovering that men lie to women and that women lie to women. Poor women! Nowhere to turn! Would she be as enlightened to find that (some) men have always told the truth to women, as (some) women have always told the truth to women?

Unfortunately, simple, honest people are the least likely to be found in any movement. What needs to happen, Geng says, is for "feminists [to] turn their attention back to where it belongs: to the truth about the daily relations between women and men." But where is this truth to be found? Does she expect to find it apart from those daily relations? Does she expect to find it in any "movement"? Does she still expect salvation through politics?

If feminists truly turn their attention back to where it belongs, I suggest they will find themselves no longer feminists and no longer political, no longer divided. To know what is going on between ourselves and those around us is a full-time job. To love and nurture those around us, amidst daily activities, is another full-time job. Feminists might learn that loving is a fine vocation, even a career, and that loving is the only way to stop the lying. Feminists might learn that feminine nature is not that of men, and that they need not apologize for this. Feminists might learn that doily-making or quilting need not embarrass, indeed that they are more real than feminist painting, for they are rooted in pa-

tience and function and skill and sanctified by timeless tradition beside which feminist painting is but the acting out of shrill hysteria.

Feminism is female chauvinism, for it is based upon reaction. As long as one is in a state of reaction, there is no freedom.

ROBERT FINLEY  
Walnut Grove, Miss.

### VERONICA GENG REPLIES:

I intended no disrespect to Janet Hart. In fact, part of the problem is that "token" women generally have to be *more* qualified than their male counterparts. My criticism is of those who point to such women as signs that all is well, and say, "See, *she* made it—so what are you women complaining about?" A recent *Times* story, misleadingly headed "Survey Finds Women Gain in White-Collar U.S. Jobs," said that 71.6 percent of all the lowest-ranking federal jobs are held by women, and only 3 percent of the "supergrade" jobs. Far from suggesting that "it is of no use to struggle," my article asked for *more* struggle.

Sharron Belson has apparently swallowed the comfy "process" line, according to which "trial and error" by the "masses" justifies the mindless stifling of opinion and thought. Sure, "the movement is now in the public domain"—and ain't I part of the public?

Robert Finley needs to be reminded that political movements of necessity deal in generalizations—in this case, the prevailing treatment of women, not "(some) men" who are exceptions. We can't make politics go away. There will always be people who have or want power over others. We have a choice between a *covert* sexual politics (what we've had for centuries) and an open examination of sexual politics (what feminism asks for). Keeping sexual politics under wraps requires, like all repression, tremendous energy that might better be spent on the loving and nurturing Mr. Finley is so eager for. If "loving is the only way to stop the lying," it's also true that stopping the lying is the only way to love.

### Arab polemics

Heartiest congratulations on having published R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.'s "Chimera in the Middle East" [November]. The subject is uniquely suited to Tyr-

rell's talents, since he is at his best when slashing at the interaction of villains (the Arabs) and fools (the goody goody Machiavellians who make American policy in the Middle East). As an unabashed fan, I would like to state my hope that Tyrrell's prose will continue to brighten *Harper's* pages.

RAEL JEAN ISAAC  
Irvington, N.Y.

A medal for bravery in the face of another Arab oil embargo should be struck for R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Unfortunately, our State Department is more interested in appeasing the sponsors of the PLO (the Saudis, who even sent a plane for Yasir Arafat so he could attend the Arab summit meeting on Lebanon) than in preserving democracy in the Middle East.

CLARA P. TREFETHER  
Grand Island, N.Y.

I was appalled to find in *Harper's* a distorted, racist, and thoroughly inaccurate piece of propaganda.

*Harper's* does no one a service by printing an article whose only purpose seems to be defaming a whole group of people. Mr. Tyrrell's attempt to be "cute" in the face of such a tragic and complex situation is disgusting.

CAROLE R. BOHN  
Cambridge, Mass.

It is inconceivable that a reputable magazine would countenance the likes of R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.'s deprecations of the Arab people had they concerned Poles, Italians, Jews, Latvians, blacks, or any of our nation's minorities, but more than 2 million Americans of Arab descent usually suffer such slanders in pained silence. Mr. Tyrrell's comments, however, are so meanly selective, so roughshod in their disregard for perspective as to cry out for redress.

One can sympathize with your desire to be provocative—and one can hope that this particularly ugly provocation will inaugurate a dialogue leading to a better understanding of the Arabs.

Mr. Tyrrell refers to a standard Arab political repertoire of terrorism but fails to mention what every student of the Arab-Israeli conflict knows—that Jews must share the onerous responsibility for terrorist activities. One cannot write the Irgun Zvei Leumi, the Stern Gang, or the murder of children, women, and the infirm at Deir Yassin out of the history books in order to



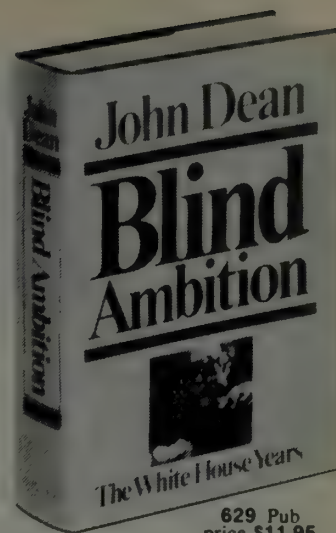
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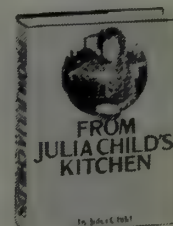
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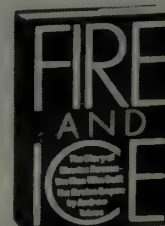
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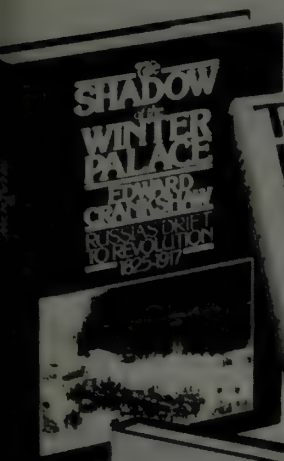


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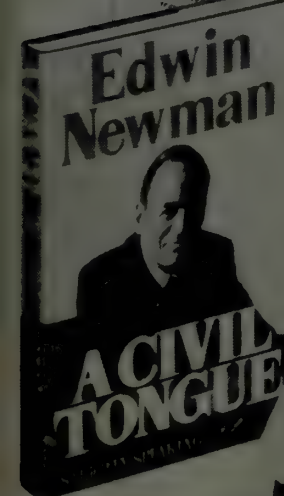
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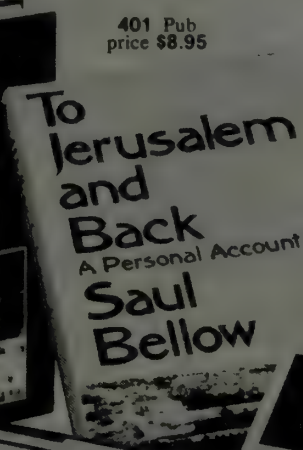


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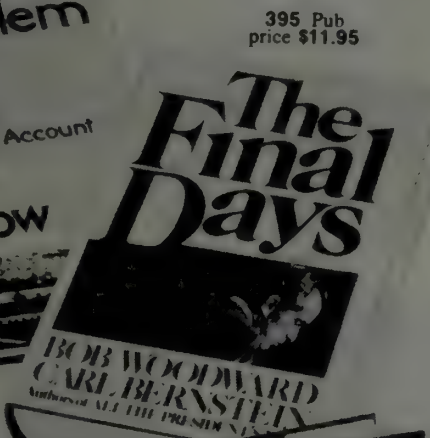
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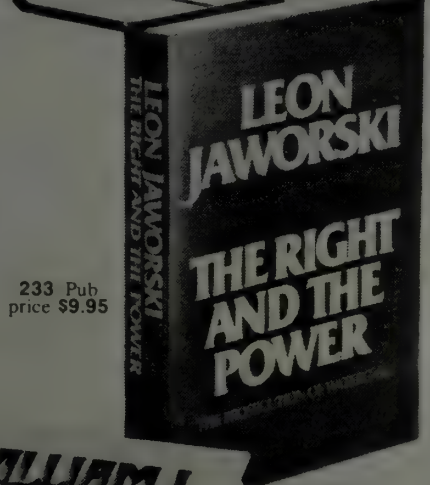
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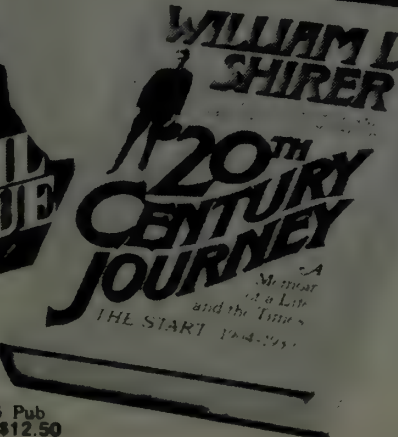
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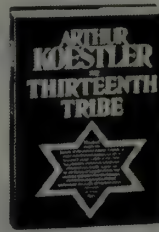


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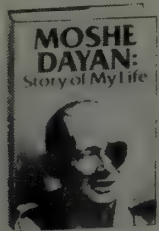


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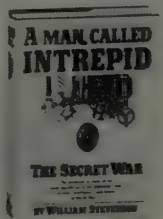


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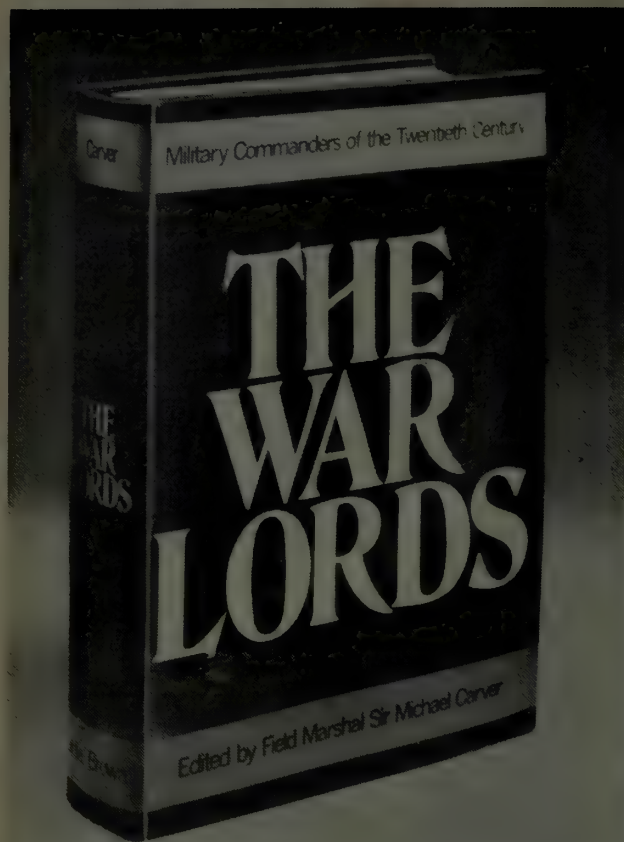


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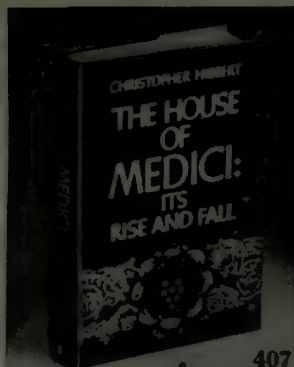
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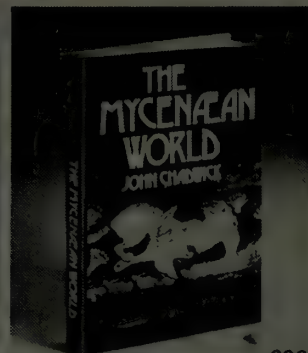
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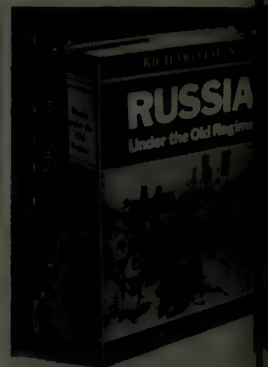
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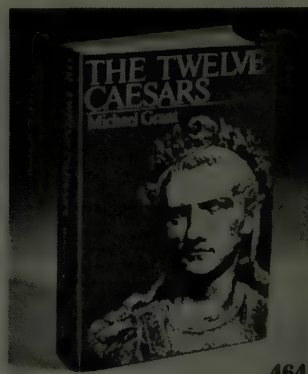
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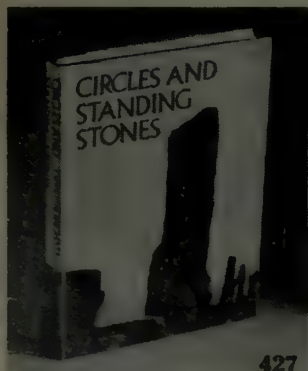
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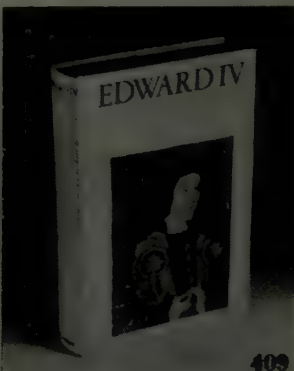
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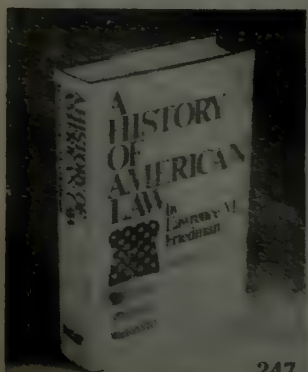
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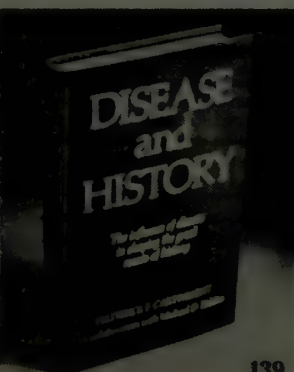
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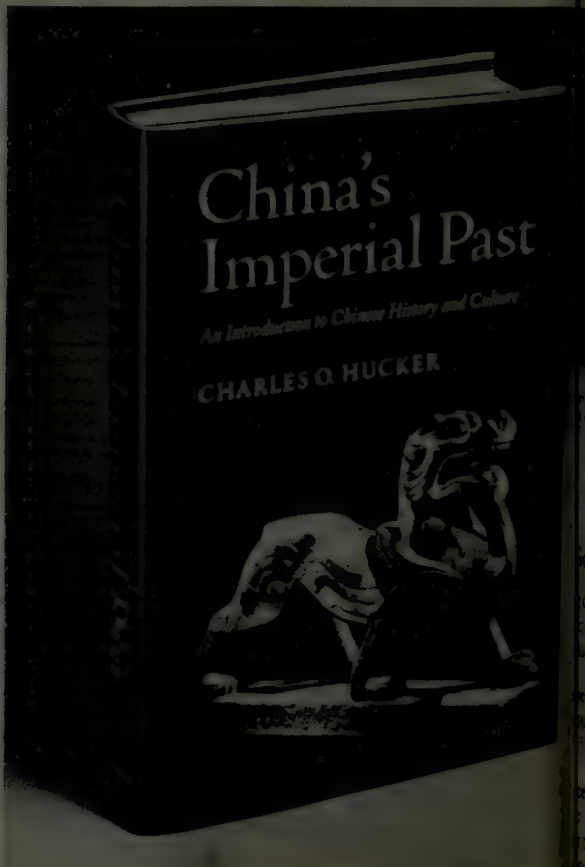
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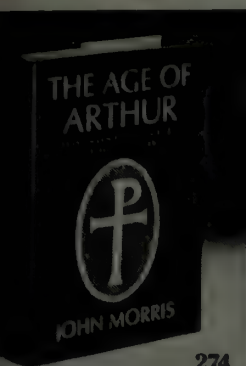
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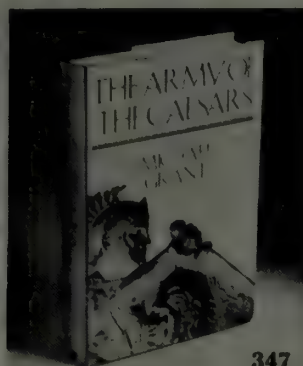


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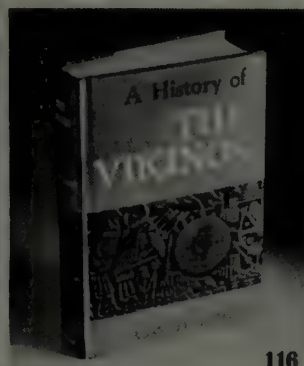
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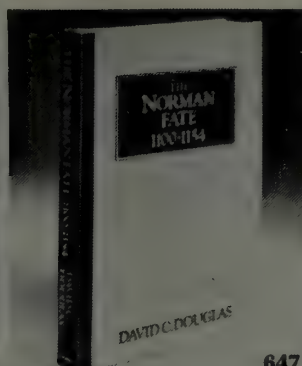
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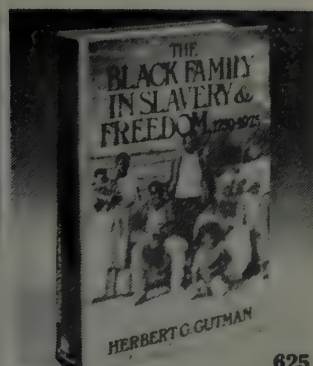
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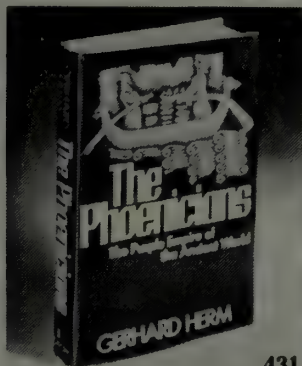
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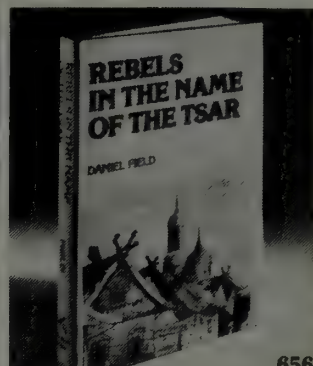
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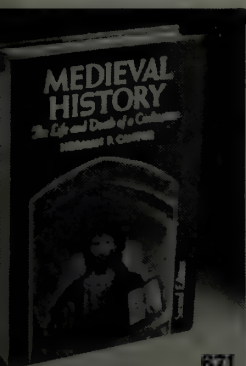
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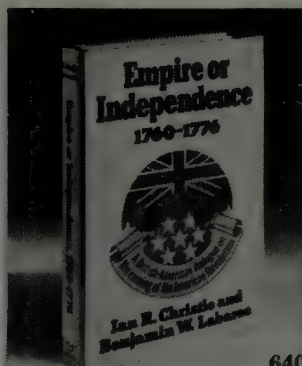
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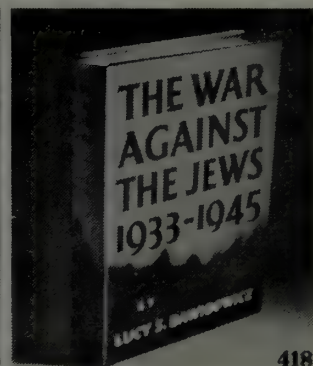
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stage-manage a conflict involving only the good guys and the bad guys.

To depict the Arabs as "drooling over" Palestine contributes little to intelligent debate and nothing to reasoned decision. Arabs were present in significant numbers throughout biblical times. Indeed, it is quite possible that people of Arab stock were present in Palestine when the Jews themselves invaded the land from the south and the east, as the Bible describes. What, then, is Mr. Tyrrell's point if not to persist in a historical fallacy?

Mr. Tyrrell is careful to quote immoderate Arabs, such as former Iraqi president Aref, hardly a man of durable stature, concerning Arab intentions toward Israel. But he cannot bring himself to concede the long list of responsible Arab leaders who have accepted the idea of a Jewish state. A careful examination of the transcripts of the United Nations debate prior to the 1948 partitioning of Palestine as well as various treaties and papers that led to partition tells a story startlingly different from Mr. Tyrrell's. I suspect he could not know as much as he knows without knowing that. The Arabs, like the Jews, have had their belligerents, but in the Arabs' case it often makes headlines while in the Jews' case it more often makes "think pieces" on Sunday Op Ed pages. One should no more accept Aref or the former grand mufti of Jerusalem as preeminent spokesmen for an Arab viewpoint than one would be satisfied that Ronald Reagan speaks for an American consensus regarding foreign policy. The Arab viewpoint is multifaceted, as is Israel's. Not every Jew is a Zionist; not every Arab "drools" at the prospect of driving Jews into the sea.

"Arabs are religious fanatics devoted to a non-Western warrior religion," Mr. Tyrrell writes. Let us pass quickly over the fact that millions of Arabs happen to be Christians, that Islamic theology and mysticism have profoundly influenced Christian and Jewish thinking, and let us assume that Mr. Tyrrell means Muslim Arabs. Islam, like Christianity, is rooted in the Judaic tradition; it would not have suited Mr. Tyrrell's thesis to say so. The scriptures of Jew and Christian alike are sacred to Muslims. Mr. Tyrrell has seized, without giving his readers a clue as to his eclectic methodology, on a passage in the Koran prescribing war against those who seek to destroy Islam. If this makes Islam a non-Western

warrior religion, what do the Crusades and the Inquisition make Christianity, and what does the eye-for-an-eye injunction of the Old Testament make Judaism? While Mr. Tyrrell shoves us headlong at a stereotype of the Arab as cutthroat religious fanatic, he implicitly invites us to forget how regularly genocide has been perpetrated in the name of Christianity. Search Arab history assiduously, and you will find nothing comparable to the Inquisition, the murder of civilians during the Crusades, or what happened in Europe in our civilized and judgmental century. Indeed throughout the past 2,000 years Jews have sought and received asylum in Arab countries from the murderousness of their Christian neighbors. That the current conflict has changed this peaceable relationship is sad but hardly justification for Tyrrell's tirade.

Mr. Tyrrell deplores the absence of contract law in the Arab tradition and a little later complains of the treatment of Arab women. Readers who remember his article may be interested to learn that the Koran made a major contribution to Western jurisprudence by giving particular attention to contract law, notably the rights of women to hold, manage, and inherit property, to make and break marriages, and to obtain property settlements as a result of divorce—this while their Christian and Jewish sisters were mere chattel. That Christian and Jewish women have now far outpaced Muslim women in such matters is deplorable, but it hardly warrants distortions of the historical truth. It is true that the Koran did not end the practice of polygamy, although it restricted it, but there were persuasive economic and social reasons for polygamy in the Prophet Muhammad's time. Ascription of innate prurience to the Arabs because of this practice smacks of the worst kind of racism.

Mr. Tyrrell makes much of an absence of democratic tradition in the Arab world; this is somewhat like deploring the absence of bathrooms among the Eskimos. Let us avoid the obvious issue as to whether it is the destiny and right of democracy to impose itself on the rest of the world and remark only that its democratic tradition did not save Europe from the disgrace of the Holocaust.

As we have had to rethink so many prejudices to keep our nation whole, let us now rethink the prejudice Mr. Tyrrell invites about the Arabs. As we no

longer tolerate Fagin-like cartoons of Jews, so let us no longer tolerate caricatures of the Arabs as venal and murderous.

DJELLOUL MARBROOK  
Washington, D.C.

R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR. replies:

The appalled Miss Bohn charges me with racism, distortion, inaccuracy, propaganda, and—but this onslaught of reason dizzies me. Let me merely remark that she makes these charges amidst a plea for high seriousness and sobriety in discussing a "complex situation"—there is here a whiff of that kind of 1970s Pecksniffery that I find so often in the coziness of academe. Djelloul Marbrook also finds me, a thoroughly American writer, writing in the traditional American idiom popularized by Twain, guilty of racism. Both reveal a deep and comprehensive contempt for a typically American mode of expression. So, Marbrook, a racist are *you*, and on to the heart of *your* screed. Doubtless Islam in its salad days was a glory, perhaps as great as coeval Europe, but my criticism is not of Islam's past but of its present, a present that will not allow people to live peacefully in the Middle East and will not recognize the legitimacy of the tiny and admirable state of Israel. It would have been helpful, Djelloul Marbrook, if, from your long list of the "responsible Arab leaders who have accepted the idea of a Jewish state," you had named one.

## Fiction critics

Patricia Duncan's "Corrida" [November] is quite simply a masterpiece of language. After reading it four, maybe five, times, I stand convinced that, as long as there are writers like Miss Duncan among us, fiction has not only a future but a vibrant present as well.

J. ALLSTON JAMES  
Carmel, Calif.

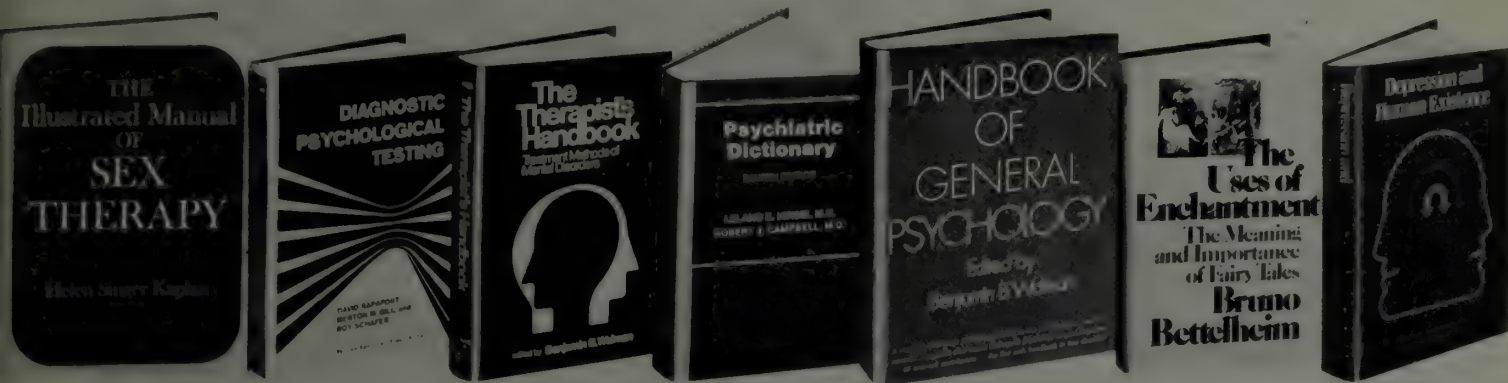
The public has but one defense against stories like "Corrida"—which is not to subscribe to, take from a library to read, or borrow from anyone a magazine whose editor(s) will accept for publication a story (if such it is) as pointless, brutish, and altogether disgusting to refined people as this one. These are very sick people portrayed in "Corrida."

ELIZABETH HOWLAND  
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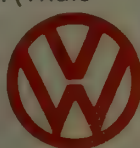
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New Faithful. The 1977 VW Rabbit.



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## AULD LANG SYNE

Jimmy Carter's election closes the political theater of the 1960s

by Lewis H. Lapham

**O**N THE MORNING that Mr. Carter was elected President I found myself drawn into the traditional conversations about the meaning of the succession. I seldom know what to say on such occasions. Whenever possible I refer anybody interested in questions of national significance to the editorial pages of the *New York Times*. To the three or four people who said that I was obligated to form an opinion on the subject, I said that as far as I could tell the election proved that the 1960s were over. For the next two weeks I tried to figure out what I had meant by the remark. Obviously I didn't refer to a chronological sequence. Nor was I thinking of miniskirts, the Beatles, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, moon landings, or the thousand days. I had in mind something more difficult to locate and describe, and I was still trying to identify the idea when I overheard a conversation in a restaurant between two men and two women who disapproved of Mr. Carter's presumption.

"I'll tell you what I think," one of the men said. "I think that Mr. Carter is a very ambitious man. I think that he means to use the Presidency as a stepping-stone."

A stepping-stone to what? To the board of directors of MGM? To a membership in the Racquet Club? To Palm Beach for the winter? The people at the table didn't pursue the question. It was enough that the fellow had given himself *Lebensraum*, that he now could go off in any number of un-

predictable directions and thus set an unfortunate example for a lot of other people with too much ambition for their own good. The view of Presidential politics as a laborious form of social climbing reminded me that there were a great many people in the United States—at least 75 million of them, to judge by the percentage of the electorate that didn't bother to vote—who don't concern themselves with the dramas playing in the newspapers. It occurred to me that what I meant by the 1960s was a sense of political theater. Mr. Carter's election had violated the conventions of that theater, which was why it was impossible to say what he would do as President.

I remembered that on the third day of the Democratic National Convention last summer a political correspondent had called from Madison Square Garden to say that he couldn't find much of anything to write about. He had questioned the usual suspects, canvassed the delegations of regional opinion, and made note of the customary promises of deliverance. All to no effect. His researches forced him back on the melancholy conclusion that politics wasn't what it used to be, that somehow the romance of the thing had been lost in transit on the road north from Georgia. I reminded him of the stirring accounts in the newspapers; I made use of the phrase "historic event" and mentioned the blasphemies of Watergate; I even went so far as to suggest that he go to an afternoon

*Lewis H. Lapham is the editor of Harper's.*

showing of *All The President's Men* or arrange to give a lecture at the Columbia School of Journalism on the imperiled First Amendment. None of these exhortations relieved him of his depression.

"I know all that," he said, "but there's nothing going on over here except media."

**I**T WAS AN observation that acquired weight and force during the autumn campaign. The media did everything they could think of to do to produce a spectacle of Bicentennial significance. The networks convened evening seminars of solemn analysis, and the newspapers published rumors, transcripts, reports, press conferences, gossip, polls, predictions, and whatever else seemed likely to maintain the willing suspension of disbelief. But no matter how hard everybody tried, it was impossible to revivify the lost dream of politics as a prelude to spiritual transcendence. This was the theatrical illusion that had been characteristic of the sixteen years between John Kennedy's accession and Gerald Ford's defeat. In retrospect the period 1960 to 1968 can be construed as the hypothesis of the Sixties and the period 1968 to 1976 as its antithesis. The two periods present mirror images of one another. If President Kennedy represented the embodiment of the American state as magical apparition, then President Nixon represented the embodiment of the American state as dis-



nal fen. Within a matter of a few years all the popular images changed into their melodramatic opposites. Hero into antihero; democracy into totalitarianism; success into failure. The fashionable celebration of government gave way to the equally fashionable abuse of government; the apologists of the New Left shifted their rhetoric into comparable positions on the New Right; the economics of abundance dwindled into the economics of scarcity; the collective rapture of the Peace Corps was transformed into the collective rapture of a march on Washington.

What was interesting about last year's campaign was the way in which the media tried to dress up the candidates in the old costumes. The costumes didn't fit very well, and this produced a mood of uneasiness among the people commissioned to write the additional dialogue. Mr. Ford was supposed to play the part of the Republican villain, but he was obviously such a kindly and simple man that it was hard to think of him plotting in a basement. Mr. Carter had been cast in the role of the reincarnated John Kennedy, but he wasn't a glamorous figure, and apparently he had made a thorough study of the electoral process. His understanding of the technology frightened the people who had assumed that they would be teaching him the business of images. It was as if Pinocchio knew more about making puppets than Gepetto.

Watching the first debate, I almost felt sorry for the impresarios who had invested so much time and money in the production. Neither Mr. Ford nor Mr. Carter could identify an issue that excited the public imagination. They couldn't speak to the needs or emotions of their audience, and so they made do with a recitation of exhausted abstractions. They juggled statistics as if they were Indian clubs, tossing them high up into the klieg lights and hoping that nothing would fall on their own heads. During the twenty-seven minutes of their enforced silence they both stood transfixed behind their rostrums, their faces set in the wooden smiles conventionally painted on children's toys. Their timid clumsiness became increasingly apparent as the campaign resolved itself into a question of which of them would make the worst mistake. This was an impression made even more embarrassing by their dependence on what other people said

about them. The rounds of interpretation and analysis that followed each debate came to be perceived as more important than the debates themselves. It no longer mattered what the candidates said; what mattered was what Harry Reasoner or Walter Cronkite said, or what the polls said, or how the newspaper critics wrote the next morning's reviews. In this regard the campaign resembled modern painting and modern architecture, in both of which arts the work of genius frequently remains incomprehensible without a prior belief in the appropriate critical theory.

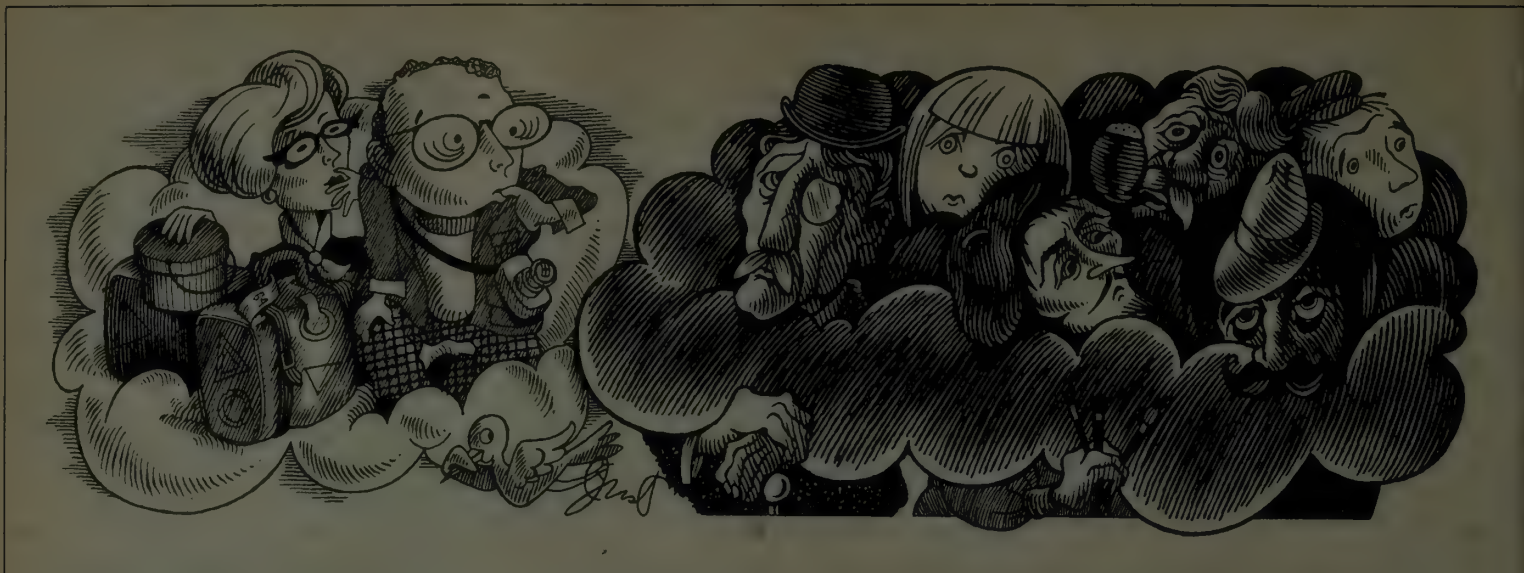
**B**Y LATE OCTOBER the media's unhappiness with the campaign expressed itself in the sullen complaints of "veteran newsmen" who went around saying that neither candidate deserved a credit above the titles. John Chancellor wrote a column to that effect for the *New York Times*, and things generally got so bad that a number of media people began to worry about their own self-importance. If either Jimmy Carter or Gerald Ford could be elected President (so went the most pessimistic line of reasoning), then what was the Presidency worth? And if the Presidency wasn't worth having except as a means of getting somewhere else (possibly into next year's Hollywood parties or to Hyannisport for the August regatta), then what would people say about the seers and augurs whose reputations depended upon their knowledge of Presidents? The mood of apathy assigned to the electorate reflected the media's concern about the loss of an audience for political melodrama. What would they put in its place? To whom could they sell all that expensive scenery left over from previous productions of Kennedy's Camelot (a musical comedy), Lyndon Johnson's Great Society (a tragic burlesque), Gene McCarthy's Children's Crusade and George McGovern's pastoral fantasy? Where would they find a new generation of writers?

Mr. Carter's election not only ignored the conventions of the political theater, but it also made nonsense out of what the characters were supposed to believe and say. What, for instance, was one to do with the idea of the citizen as victim? The standard political dialogue of the past sixteen years begins with the assumption that the

individual can do nothing against the juggernaut of the modern state. The average man supposedly remains helpless and afraid, following the instructions painted on the sides of buildings, stumbling toward extinction. But if Mr. Carter can seize the White House without any credentials other than his own diligence and courage, then what becomes of the invincible machine? What happens to the well-known community of experts? Has it not often been said, most notably by such quasi-official tribunals as Nelson Rockefeller's Commission on Critical Choices for Americans, that only a thorough understanding of all the facts qualifies a man for admission into the arena of international affairs? But Mr. Carter possessed none of the customary credentials. His campaign speeches suggested that he knew little more than the rudiments of geography and absolutely nothing about the sacred mysteries of foreign policy. What is one to do with the idea of an Establishment cabal? The prevailing conspiracy theories hold that nothing of any consequence happens in the United States without the permission of the FBI, the Mafia, or the CIA. The advent of an obscure farmer from south Georgia raises awkward questions about the vigilance of this cabal. Why didn't somebody intervene on behalf of the New York financial interests? Where were the armies of the night? Or, to cite just one further example of an inoperative truism, what becomes of the idea of a sylvan paradise? The leading philosophers of the age have agreed that no man in his right mind would abandon the refuge of the countryside for the noise and commerce of the city, much less for the small-minded subterfuges of public administration. But if this is so, then why didn't Mr. Carter stay in his pond house, fishing for bass and reading the works of Reinhold Niebuhr?

Mr. Carter's election contradicts so many of the assumptions popular in the two phases of the 1960s that his arrival in Washington presupposes a shift in sensibility of the kind that historians usually associate with the beginning of a new decade. For this much, at least, the country owes him a debt of gratitude. If he can manage to reduce the confusion between the business of government and television soap opera, then he might have a chance to redeem at least a few of the promises that he has made to so many people. □





# THE COMING CRISIS IN EUROPE

In search of a safe currency

by Richard J. Whalen

**A**N AMERICAN VISITOR finds that Europeans are worrying about a coming economic crisis they cannot name. They are wasting little time studying econometric models or statistical series, for they know the crisis and its possible cure are not to be found there. Instead they concentrate on political analysis and explicitly join the political and economic factors that Americans still, naively, tend to look at separately. Thus, a visitor's query about a given country's economic prospects invariably produces an assessment of the intelligence and fortitude of the incumbent government.

If the American abroad also finds that his European hosts are quite pessimistic, it is because the weak governments of present-day Europe seem unable to deal with the problems they alone can resolve. The policy questions summed up in the term *stagflation*—persistent high inflation accompanied by equally stubborn unemployment—are too difficult for uncertain politicians confronted with powerful interest groups, particularly left-wing unions. Expediency leads weak governments to treat the problems caused by inflation with pseudo-policies which themselves turn out to be inflationary.

One does not have to be an economist to see that European prices have gone out of control, especially in the prosperous, hard-money northern countries. Street scenes in such financial cen-

ters as Frankfurt and Zurich make vivid the data attesting that the wealthier Europeans are now richer than their American counterparts. They are better dressed than the pedestrians on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, and their elegant shops are jammed with luxury goods at prices that stun and humble an American window-shopper. The price differential between the U.S. and Europe has become outlandish. A detailed index of the comparative cost of "executive lifestyles," taking Washington as the base of 100, currently rates Geneva at 153.5, Stockholm at 150, The Hague at 138.5, Paris at 138.3, Munich at 132.3, Brussels at 131.6, Frankfurt at 131.6, Rome at 120.2, and London at 109.2.

**A**MERICANS IMPRESSED with the ease of movement of people and goods within the European Economic Community—customs officials there are more friendly than the surly misanthropes who bar U.S. ports of entry—still tend to assume Europe is dominated by an impulse toward unity. On the contrary, the Community is laboring under the pressures of divergent inflationary trends, made acute by the system of floating currency exchange

rates. Since the abandonment of fixed exchange rates three years ago, market forces have determined the relative values of European currencies. In theory, such floating rates were supposed to cushion and contain inflationary pressures, averting devaluation crises. In practice, the new system makes the crisis almost continual and actually encourages the general level of prices to rise.

Floating currencies are causing European countries to drift into two hostile camps, those with high and low rates of inflation. The high-inflation countries—Britain, France, and Italy—have their currencies devalued in the exchange markets, and this in turn increases the cost of their imports. The others, such as Germany and its smaller trading partners whose currencies move in tandem with the *deutschmark*, are forced to revalue their currencies and subsidize their more expensive exports in order to maintain industrial production and employment. Because the prices of their imports do not fall nearly as much as currency values, and because the high-inflation countries export their excess paper money, thereby increasing liquidity in the relatively stable countries, the latter find that their reward for noninflationary virtue is a ratchet-like escalation of their own prices. This process cannot continue indefinitely without destroying the EEC. "The successful and the unsuccessful seldom have the same in-

*Richard J. Whalen is a Washington-based writer and business consultant. His most recent book is Taking Sides: A Personal View of America from Kennedy to Nixon to Kennedy.*



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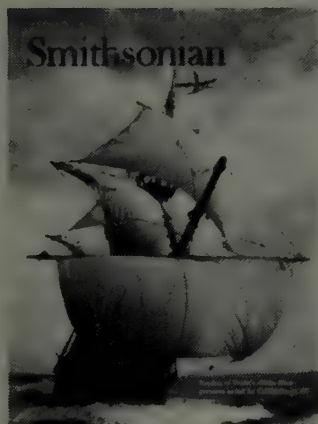
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Volume X, Number 5

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Alton Ochsner, M.D.

## ON THE ROLE OF VITAMINS C AND E IN MEDICINE

*A world-famous surgeon tells you how and why  
he uses these two essential vitamins*

**PUBLISHER'S NOTE:** *Dr. Ochsner is one of the outstanding international leaders in modern medical progress. Now Emeritus Professor of Surgery at Tulane University School of Medicine, he maintains an active practice at the famed Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans. As a member of our Editorial Board, we have asked him, out of his unique long personal experience with vitamins C and E, to tell you how and why he uses them.*

—Richard Stanton

The American public has become very health-conscious which is extremely desirable because most of us, when we arrive in this troubled world, are endowed with the most marvelously efficient mechanism ever devised, and much depends on us whether this mechanism will function properly and last without becoming prematurely obsolete.

No longer is longevity the principal consideration, and rightly so, because the desideratum is healthy and useful life as long as possible. Because of the health-consciousness of the public, people are avid for information concerning their health and factors which may

improve it. It is inconsistent, however, that individuals concerned about remaining healthy and prolonging a useful life, adopt practices which are definitely known to accelerate aging, produce disabling illness, and shorten life. These are the use of tobacco, the abuse of alcohol, and excesses of all kinds.

Vitamin use has been a controversial subject for a number of years, and although vitamin deficiency is extremely undesirable, can be hazardous and even fatal, often vitamins are used when they are not needed. However, with advancing age it is probably desirable to use vitamin supplements because of de-

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## THE COMING CRISIS IN EUROPE

terest," dryly observes René Larre, managing director of the Bank for International Settlements in Basel.

Pessimism is widespread among European capitalists, especially the bankers who are hired to invest and worry over other people's money. To the affluent European, his banker is an across-the-board financial adviser, broker and money manager, as well as a kind of secular father confessor. (It is said that the prudent German will not get married without his banker's blessing.) Long hours of private conversation with bankers from London to Geneva enable the American visitor to overhear the interior monologue of moneyed Europeans. As if with a single voice, their bankers say: "We are very worried about the future."

Money alone, even the gold-backed Swiss franc, cannot dispel this worry or buy the anxious European the kind of easy assurance of personal security that the ordinary American possesses. Usually without realizing it, the American enjoys a broad margin for error in contrast to the envious European, who believes his own margin has disappeared. Whatever else may worry him, the typical American loses no sleep over the danger of political upheaval and its consequences. A great many Europeans who are not paranoid see precisely that danger.

As a class, European bankers are better educated and more politically sophisticated than those in America. They are free of the kind of mindless boosterism that causes leading American bankers to become outspoken advocates of "free enterprise," forgetting that their banks are government-regulated and -protected. The European style is more inclined to praise capitalism without falsifying it. Thus, in a recent exposition of the theme "free enterprise will survive," Dr. A. Schaefer, chairman of the Union Bank of Switzerland, offered this unblinking judgment: "Among the greatest problems of the free-enterprise system is the inequality of income and wealth. We have been successful in creating an affluent society but not a just one."

The skepticism of European bankers is inbred, the product of centuries of experience in dealing with faithless princes and deceitful politicians, their bad debts and debased currencies. Unlike their American counterparts, European bankers have never succumbed to the false notion of banking as a "growth" industry, to be achieved by

aggressive lending and risk-taking. They and their clients so distrust the very idea of growth that they are reluctant these days even to take stock-market risks in pursuit of above-average yields. They are interested almost to the point of obsession in trying to protect their capital, and toward that end they are sending money to America.

**C**APITAL IS MOVING from Europe to the United States in tremendous quantities. Wall Street bankers with long memories find the flow eerily reminiscent of the years prior to the outbreak of World War II. In the phrase of consulting economist Eliot Janeway, who enjoys the confidence of influential European bankers, the New York Federal Reserve Bank is becoming "a financial Ellis Island" for foreign capitalists. "This flight into the dollar has nothing to do with economics," Janeway says. "It is the preliminary to a very serious world crisis."

Europeans who are forsaking much higher yields to buy Triple-A-rated bonds in New York confirm this assessment. They are not at all certain of the shape and timing and extent of the crisis. But they do not doubt it will come. As much as anything, they are attempting to flee a claustrophobic state of mind. A German-born American broker who escaped the Nazis in 1938 and made his fortune in the U.S. recently spent a month visiting wealthy old friends in Italy, France, Germany, and Switzerland. "There is a fear of fear among them," he reports. "They have no faith in Europe."

Although they worry about the socialists, the Communists, and the Russians, and their imaginations are capable of conjuring up visions of revolution and ruin, European capitalists gradually disclose to an American willing to listen that the deepest source of their fear lies close to home. They are afraid that the mixed system of welfare capitalism which they helped create is headed for disaster. For a generation, through the mid-1970s, Western Europe enjoyed the most rapid and broad-based material progress in its history. In the key economies—Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Holland, Belgium, and Sweden—disposable consumer income grew by 400 to 750 percent. Some of these gains were lost to inflation, but the Europeans en-

joyed better diets, fashionable clothing, more living space, and, with the arrival of the automobile, greater mobility.

European governments simultaneously encouraged personal consumption and embarked on increased welfare spending. Ambitiously, they redistributed incomes and uplifted the rural poor toward full consumer status. To ensure growth they gave investment incentives to industry for expanded output. High wages and labor shortages drew millions of Southern Europeans northward, and their remittances sent a measure of prosperity back to the slums of the Mediterranean countries. Many of these workers are now redundant and have been sent home.

In those years of easily compounded growth, European governments faced few hard choices. More consumption and more welfare were perfectly compatible. Holland, for example, built a comprehensive welfare state at breakneck speed. Between 1955 and 1974 disposable income in Holland increased almost sixfold, but the generous Dutch were also boosting government transfer payments *sixteen-fold*. Throughout Western Europe during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the same pattern prevailed. As national incomes rose, government welfare spending rose even faster, creating budget deficits that were financed through heavy borrowing or outright inflation. Britain, France, and Italy took the expedient path of paying their bills by printing extra currency.

Europe's era of high growth came to an abrupt end in the severe recession of 1974-75, which stemmed directly from increased public spending. Despite the current slowdown, public budgets are as swollen as ever. Therefore, the new era of low growth—or, in the case of bankrupt Britain, no growth—could drag on for years.

Politicians speak glibly of "export-led recovery" in the near future, but skeptical businessmen know better. The major European countries cannot all enjoy simultaneous export-led recovery unless one of them absorbs a flood of imports and runs a heavy trade deficit. Germany, the strongest economic power in Europe, insists on maintaining a large trade surplus in order to prevent unemployment from rising higher than it already is. The German expedient is to subsidize exports by making loans to chronic deficit countries such as Italy, a gambit that fails when the borrower can't repay.



The trade-oriented European economies are vulnerable to increased energy and raw materials costs, and OPEC's price-gouging has had a devastating impact. Labor cost pressures are also intense. Wage demands by politically well-connected European unions make even the Teamsters appear reasonable. Between 1970 and 1975, manufacturing wages rose 43 percent in the U.S., 59 percent in Germany, 98 percent in France, 112 percent in Britain, and 128 percent in Italy. Indirect labor costs are also considerably higher in several European countries than in the U.S. As a result, important European industries, such as autos, steel, and electronics, are losing their competitive vitality and are being clobbered in their own markets by the Japanese, who invented export-led economic growth.

**IS THERE A WAY out for Europe?**

The simplest remedy would be to boost exports to the huge American market, but that would cause serious problems for American politicians, from the White House down, who owe their position to protectionist labor unions worried about their members' jobs. Besides, the fast-moving Japanese may already have beaten the Europeans to the cream of the recovering American market. (Japan's auto exports to the U.S. rose an astonishing 100 percent in 1976.) The U.S., with a large trade deficit of its own, would not like to expand exports.

As frightened capitalists suspect, there appear to be only more and less painful ways back to health for Europe. The economic remedy is clear-cut. The momentum of the ever-expanding welfare state will have to be halted and reversed, so that government spending is brought closer into balance with national incomes. Politically, this means disappointing the expectations and shrinking the incomes of particular classes of people in order to shift resources from consumption to investment. If the less affluent will forgo their turn at high consumption, at least temporarily, permitting welfare budgets to be scaled down, perhaps the wealthy can be encouraged to increase their investment. Capital investment cannot be coerced; it must be coaxed, lured and seduced by the scent of profits. European capital has reacted to an increasingly hostile political climate by "going on strike" and passing up in-

vestment opportunities. Even in Germany, the level of capital spending is no higher than it was five years ago. Deutschemarks taking refuge in New York are not buying new machinery in Stuttgart. To achieve economic recovery, European socialist politicians steeped in Marxist dogma probably will have to permit their traditional class enemies to make capitalism work.

Will they go that far? The answer may come soon in Britain. The physical aspect of London reflects the free fall of sterling and the stagnation of the zero-growth economy. The best sections of the city are dotted with "to let" signs, tombstones of the late real-estate boom. The new Arab owners of the Dorchester Hotel and other recent property bargains are much in evidence. Once-posh Mayfair shopping streets are becoming seedy, as though the proudest shopkeepers in England had lost the will to keep up appearances when the hordes of buyers come, willy-nilly, to take advantage of the cheap pound.

The Labor government's austerity program, the latest in Britain's long postwar slide, is the responsibility of Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey, who at least sounds as though

he understands what is at stake and what is required. Indeed, he sounds like an arch-Tory in his severe prescriptions. Last October, he told members of the British financial community: "Inflation is the greatest enemy of full employment. . . . We cannot afford to base our economic growth on an increase in domestic consumption. We must base it on exports, import substitution, and investment. Until we have eliminated the deficit on our balance of payments we can afford no increase in public or private spending. On the contrary. Living standards will have to suffer a further fall before we are paying our way in the world again."

The pound promptly fell to an all-time low as foreign exchange markets questioned the political will behind Healey's brave words.

The grim prospects in England now could spread throughout Europe in the future. British interest rates have been raised to the high teens. Credit is being squeezed relentlessly. The choice is between controlled deflation or uncontrolled inflation and eventual collapse. European capitalists are not afraid of the recession that may come this year. They are afraid of the day when deflation becomes unavoidable. □

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# AFTERNOON IN PURGATORY

## SENTENCE DEFERRED IN ALABAMA

by Joseph P. Kahn

**J**OHNNY LEE CLAUSELL can never have understood the dimensions of this delicate dance for his life.

Johnny Lee, a black man twenty years of age, had already confessed to the Monroe County sheriff—we all heard the tape—that he had participated in the brutal murder of Moline Tatum, a middle-aged white resident of Monroeville, Alabama. A turkey hunter had discovered Tatum's roasted corpse curled around a pine tree up by the gravel pit on the old Coon Trail Road. The victim had been beaten with a club, slashed with a knife, stabbed in the heart with a screwdriver, doused with gasoline, and set on fire. Tatum had apparently run almost 100 feet, blazing, before he had curled up like a sausage link and died. The Sheriff's Department had been able to trace the victim's macabre waltz by noting the little brush fires he had set as he stumbled.

Johnny Lee was confused and scared. Someone had called in some Montgomery lawyers for him, but he couldn't even tell them the same story twice. He had intimated that there were others directly involved in the crime, that he'd been there, maybe slashed ole Moline a bit, maybe hit him once or twice with a stick, but that he hadn't poured the gas or lit the match. Then he had suggested that this had been a contract killing. Somebody's estranged wife had been slipping around with Tatum, he said, and this guy had paid him to kill Tatum. His defense team was a little nervous with this one, if true, because, unless the prosecution was in the mood to trade some favors for Johnny Lee's testimony against his employer, he would be falling squarely within the

Alabama death penalty statute, which states, "If the jury finds the Defendant guilty, they shall fix the punishment at death when the Defendant is charged by indictment with any of the following . . . (g) murder in the first degree when the killing was done for a pecuniary or other valuable consideration, or pursuant to a contract or for hire."

The Alabama statute also requires the death penalty for kidnap murders, rape murders, and robbery murders.

As yet, there was no jury to be faced. This was still the preliminary hearing, a proceeding to establish whether or not sufficient evidence against the defendant existed to seek a grand jury indictment. The cavernous courtroom stood virtually empty, almost as empty as the old Monroeville courthouse next door, the same building where Harper Lee's father practiced law and which was copied for the trial scenes in the movie *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The Monroeville Historical Society has taken over the old courtroom now and filled it with Monroeville memorabilia. I talked to a languid old woman up there who ran the place and claimed to be Truman Capote's aunt. "Truman still comes down at least once a year and stays with me," she said, anxious to have me linger. "Nobody in the society can make it up these stairs any more, and I'm getting to the same stage myself."

The town looked deserted, but hotel space was scarce. The National Fox and Wolf Hound Association was convening in Monroeville, and everyone was out in the woods, treeing coons. I doubt many of them knew or cared about Johnny Lee's preliminary hear-

*Joseph P. Kahn, a free-lance writer, has traveled extensively in the South.*

ing. A hearing like this would normally last only about an hour, anyway, maybe two at the most—just long enough to recoil at the coroner's pictures and hear the taped confession (or the sheriff's version of it) and let the law-enforcement officers describe the scene of the crime and how they finally fingered the accused.

But it wasn't looking that way. The turkey hunter had been asked to go over his testimony four or five times, and the deputy who was first summoned finally had to retire from the witness stand to retrieve his notes from the day in question. The prosecution could hear the defense team discussing where they could find lodging for the night so they could be back in court promptly in the morning. If they weren't taking the hint, the judge was, for he felt compelled to remind both sides that the following afternoon was his fishing afternoon, and he took a dim view of anything or anyone who interfered with *that*. The sheriff had now been in the box for almost an hour and didn't seem any closer to being excused than when he'd first arrived. The prosecution ruffled their files and looked uneasy.

The defense didn't care at all. The judge could go fishing for the rest of the week or the rest of the year. What concerned them was the death penalty. They were painstakingly laying the groundwork for an all-out death-penalty defense. If necessary, they would run Moline Tatum around that gravel pit a hundred times if each grisly replay would buy them some time and push the prosecution closer to accepting a plea for life imprisonment. They had been in this kind of struggle before. They knew that Johnny Lee had told them a whole anthology of stories,



ll of them probably fictitious. But they also knew how a small-town Southern jury was going to react to the odor of burning white flesh when it was consumed up for them by the district attorney. They could already see him ripping the jury box railing and crying, "Just imagine Moline Tatum's final agony! Imagine the horror as he rolled in the dirt struggling to smother the flames that were consuming him! Preserve in your minds the picture of Johnny Lee Clausell standing there with a bloody screwdriver in one hand and an empty gas can in the other! Was there any mercy in *his* heart? Was there an ounce of humanity in *his* soul as he watched Moline Tatum run by him all aflame? I submit to you that the electric chair is almost too compassionate a form of justice for such an act. In the name of all that is human, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, in the name of whatever scraps of morality our community still clings to, I ask you now for the just and proper punishment of death."

*The just and proper punishment of death.* At the same time that the defense team was picking over the testimony of the state's witnesses (the sheriff was denying for the eleventh time that he had either beaten or threatened the confession out of the defendant), it was combing through the fabric of the death-penalty statute itself. Could the prosecution make one tick? Such a question might have been academic before last July 2, but now the Supreme Court had opened the constitutional gates for executions to resume, and no death case could be taken lightly. Alabama would probably have to rewrite its statute to comply with the High Court on jury (rather than judicial) discretion, but that hardly offered much hope for Johnny Lee Clausell. He was clearly up against death—but on what grounds? Kidnapping and murder? Unlikely. Tatum had apparently gone along willingly to the gravel pit. Rape was out, as was every other applicable clause except contract murder and robbery. Johnny Lee had already introduced the first of these himself, but his alleged employer was sitting outside ready to testify and had already agreed to a polygraph test. Robbery? There didn't seem to have been much to take. Tatum's billfold had evidently burned while it was still in his pants pocket. All of these little details were crucial to the ultimate outcome of the

case, and the defense was taking great pains to go over the facts again and again with the officers who first searched the scene. Meanwhile, the message to the prosecution was loud and clear: we are digging in for a war of nerves, a war of attrition. You will have to be extremely determined to go out and get death on this one.

**T**HE SHERIFF—Glenwood was his first name, and Holly-wood could never have cast a better "Glenwood"—was being so stubborn and so literal with his answers that he was playing directly into the hands of the defense. He was being led by the nose through the chronology of crime and arrest by John Carroll, a young Harvard Law graduate who knew the value of repetition. Carroll approached him with a copy of Johnny Lee's affidavit.

"Could you tell me what this is, sheriff?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"A piece of paper."

"Could you describe it, then?"

"Yes."

"Describe it, please."

"Well, it's kinda long, and it's covered with all sorts of writing."

Glenwood loved this game. No liberal la-de-da lawyer was going to make him say anything more than he god-damn well pleased. When Carroll questioned him as to whether he'd been "directed to the scene of the crime" by his deputy's radio report, Glenwood replied frostily, "Mister, this is my county and nobody around here directs me to do *nothing*." But he said he'd known Johnny Lee for a long time, had always liked him, had never had any trouble with him before. Then he admitted he'd locked the accused up for three days without charging him and then rearrested him five days later on a first-degree-murder rap. Why had he been jailed the first time? "For telling me lies," growled Glenwood.

We had already gone past the five o'clock deadline imposed by the judge, and now His Honor reminded us he had a dinner date. Two-thirds of the subpoenaed witnesses were still sitting outside, waiting to be called. Glenwood was mentioning that he'd sniffed out Johnny Lee's trail through a watch he'd pawned that had belonged to the victim. Now John Carroll began press-

ing him for the names of other material witnesses who would be brought in, a tactic which had the prosecution initially up in arms and then sullenly complying as the hearing dragged on. The sheriff revealed that they'd found out that Johnny Lee owed Moline Tatum some payments on his pickup truck. "We aren't *trying* to keep any evidence from the defense," whined the prosecutor. The judge was taking overt readings from his wristwatch. "We have other cases to try, too."

The judge called it quits at five-thirty. He would permit the court recorder to stay and take testimony from the coroner, who had come in early in the day from another town, but he was already late for dinner. Johnny Lee's mother, the only spectator in the courtroom, squeezed John Carroll's shoulder, thanked him, and hurried off to get supper for the rest of her family. The prosecutor had a family waiting at home, too. He was hungry and his little boy would have to be in bed soon. He was also staring numbly at weeks, maybe months, of discovery motions, evidentiary motions, jury-selection wrangles, cross-examinations, penalty-phase dramatics. He wasn't even sure he could prove a death case anyway. By six o'clock, he had struck the bargain: should the grand jury bring in an indictment on Johnny Lee, he would let him plead guilty to a charge carrying a sentence of life imprisonment. There would be no further pretrial proceedings. Johnny Lee was asked before the recorder if he understood the agreement, and Johnny Lee, still scared and confused, mumbled no. He was prepped again. Yes, he said, I understand. The prosecutor went home to have a drink.

John Carroll stopped me at the door. "The watch," he muttered, "they had the damn death sentence on that lousy little watch. He pawned it for over five bucks—that's grand larceny." He pushed around his thinning hair. "You just saw an airtight capital case collapse under the weight of sheer tedium and a judge's fishing date."

Sometime early next year, probably in a Southern state, the state will get back into the business of killing. The men they lead down those long corridors and strap electrodes onto and fry up until they are as crisp as Moline Tatum will mostly be poor and black and confused, like Johnny Lee Clausell. Only Johnny Lee Clausell won't be one of them. □



# BLOOD MONEY

Sheep slaughter at government rates

by Steven Ashley

**T**HESE BIG PUREBRED Suffolk rams have balls the size of apples and the seamless short necks of sumo wrestlers. Black head, black legs, maybe a bit of black on the brisket or along the belly. The neck hair is curled, à la Paul Newman. They've got great long Roman noses. One expects them to shrug.

If a Rolls-Royce had a little intelligence—intelligence, say, slightly less than a dog's—one would expect the Rolls-Royce to act like these rams—certain of our admiration—certain of their place in the world.

They're big: three, three-hundred-fifty pounds. "I've got a thirty-three-inch inseam," Oden Thompson said, "and when I straddled Leader, I had to stand on tiptoe. His ears—they weren't too good. His ears were a little short for what I like to see."

**T**HE FORE TRIBE in the eastern highlands of New Guinea practices ritual cannibalism. When a kinsman dies, they eat part of him at the funeral. I don't know what reasons the Fore give for their custom. If you pause for a moment, your guesses will be much the same as mine.

Since 1957 some 2,500 Fore people have died from kuru. Kuru is an invariably fatal wasting disease of the central nervous system, characterized by trembling, failure of coordination, dysarthria (slurred speech), dysphagia (difficulty in swallowing), and death. Kuru has killed four-year-olds and people in their sixties, but it mostly gets young adults between fifteen and thirty. When symptoms first appear, the victim has, at the outside, a year.

In 1972, in the interests of asepsis and tourism, the government of New Guinea launched a campaign to discourage cannibalism. It mostly worked.

Kuru is, today, greatly reduced among the Fore people. I don't know what else happened to them.

*A man just naturally wants to do better. That's why we bought Leader. We had some tremendous lambs out of him. Tremendous.*

—Oden Thompson

**I**N 1953, PROMPTED BY serious outbreaks of hoof-and-mouth disease and hog cholera, the United States Congress passed a law authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to eradicate disease by eradicating all the animals who'd been exposed to the disease.

The law enumerated half-a-dozen diseases, including sheep scrapie, but the list was not meant to be exclusive. The Secretary of Agriculture has the power to kill animals exposed to *any* disease "which, in the opinion of the Secretary of Agriculture, constitutes an emergency and threatens the livestock industry of this country."

Some months later, Secretary Ezra Taft Benson issued a directive on indemnification. Since public discussion of the indemnification program would be contrary to the public interest—the Secretary said—there wouldn't be any.

The federal government pays the owners of slaughtered flocks. Up to 50 percent of their value. Under the eradication program, the feds have killed better than 90,000 sheep. And paid up to half their value. The worst government is the government farthest from home.

*Steven Ashley, a West Virginia farmer and novelist, is the author of Stalking Blind.*



**E**VERY MONDAY morning, quite early, Mr. Oden Thompson of Brandywine, West Virginia, drives off to work. He takes Route 33 to Elkins, catches U.S. 250 to Billington, then 92 to Morgantown, 79 over to 70 into Wheeling, and Route 7 across the bridge into Brilliant, where he's working on the new Cardinal power plant; 230 miles. He spends the week in Brilliant and comes back every weekend to his farm. In twenty years as an ironworker, this is the first job that's kept him away from home overnight. When he worked at Mount Storm, it was only 180 miles round trip, and he ate supper with his family every night.

"It's a hard, dirty, dangerous job. I ain't ever seen no easy work in ironwork."

He prefers working in the fabricating shop, welding and burning. The day goes quicker.

Oden Thompson has five sons. They're good-looking boys—a couple of them have wide-set dark eyes and this disconcertingly direct stare.

He has a hand-painted sign on his front porch:

*Thompson's Wayside Rest  
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fishermen  
campers  
deers (dears)  
drunks  
KIDS!*

He has another, more formal sign in front of the house:

*Oden Thompson & Sons  
Purebred Suffolk Sheep*

**A**N ORPHAN LAMB is the perfect waif. It's January, cold and dark, and you're holding this animal in your arms because it's sick or its mother doesn't



have the milk or won't own it, and the lamb is spindly-legged and still wet from the lamb bed. You put it in a box by the stove. Every winter the house smells of woodsmoke and lamb piss.

Most of them die. They're very fragile. It feels like your big clumsy hand is going to crush its rib cage.

Some survive. It's a big day when you take them outdoors into the sun for their very first lamb dance.

**S**CRAPIE IS AN incurable disease that will probably never be curable. Policy is eradication, not cure. It's thought that scrapie is caused by a virus, though viruses normally inflame tissue, while the scrapie virus produces a progressive degenerative disorder of the central nervous system. The scrapie virus has a remarkably long incubation period—two years plus—and the virus is resistant to heat and chemical treatments that usually render viruses inactive.

Scrapie resembles a few other diseases, two of which occur naturally in man: kuru and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (C-J disease).

These diseases all *act* alike and there's some mildly ominous research suggesting that man just *might* be susceptible to scrapie. Scrapie, kuru, and C-J disease will all "take" if inoculated into the brain of a chimpanzee. And scrapie has been transmitted from sheep to chimps and back to sheep again.

Because of the long incubation period, scrapie is a researcher's nightmare. In rare cases, scrapie has taken as long as twelve years to become active—and twelve years is very nearly a sheep's lifetime.

Scrapie is rare in the U.S., but common in England (10,000 to 15,000 cases a year) and occurs throughout Europe, Asia—even Iceland. New Zealand and Australia have successfully eradicated the disease with programs very much like the U.S. program. New Zealand and Australia are islands.

If scrapie is allowed to run its course in a flock, mortality varies between 2 and 60 percent. It's reasonable to assume that 30 percent of an infected flock will die.

No one is quite sure how scrapie is transmitted naturally. Sheep fed brain matter from infected sheep will contract the disease. But lab mice, who readily contract scrapie when inocu-

## GODIVA IN THE NURSERY

by Dorothy Schuchman

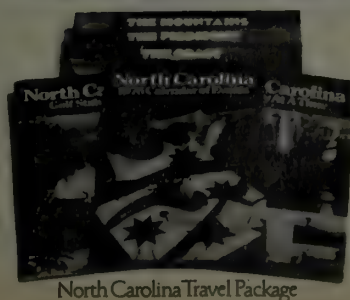
*"And your desire shall be to him."*

When the bough breaks and the babes burn there will be time—tomorrow; today's arms are a huddle of brooms and a crossed heart. The motto upon these arms, a wearable one—it is "To requite good seasonably done, and even not done." Put that on your coat!

Tomorrow, the mad stripper, will take it off. Will amble the stones conspicuous, screening with soft scanty hair the stiff reminders that no time will be tomorrow; that the decreasing street blinds with barred shutters the lust that might have peeked once; that the ride brings neither love nor shame.

Ride out, adventurer; visions cling, and cries echo; poisoned, the love-coat clings and tries flesh with a sweeping flame that won't consume. Here on my hand the red-backed ladybird rests on a human pyre and won't be stirred with news of burnings, for she is afire. She is a fire, and she will not go home.

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## Marriage in Trouble

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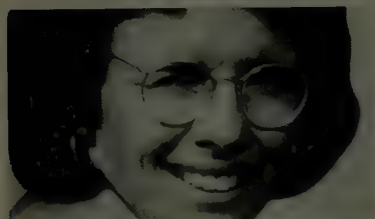
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### BLOOD MONEY

lated, don't catch it when fed a diet of scrapie-infected urine, feces, and bed-straw.

Some researchers have claimed scrapie is transmitted genetically. There's evidence that some sheep are more susceptible to scrapie than others and, contrariwise, some may be naturally immune. Too, the disease seems to follow breeds. Some breeds, like the Dorset Down, probably never get it. Suffolks contract it readily.

The official position is that scrapie spreads from flock to flock by the movement of the infected animals who are incubating the virus. Since it's impossible to determine which sheep in an infected flock are incubating the disease, all exposed sheep are killed. In deference to the genetic theorists, the bloodline descendants of infected sheep are killed too.

The most widely noted symptom of scrapie is the rubbing. There's debilitation, nervousness, and other signs of a nervous disorder. Finally the animal gets too weak to eat. "We'd brought Leader out from the ewes, it was the end of last October, and he was a little run down, but we thought that was from being with the ewes. He started rubbing himself on the guy line from the electric pole. We thought he might have, you know, sheep lice. He never did show any sign of nervousness except when I'd give him a shot of penicillin. He'd jump then. Oh, he could run like an elk."

Oden Thompson's a wiry man with slicked-back, gray-flecked, heavy black hair. His face gets real cheery when he talks about the kids, or lambing, or last year, when the whole family went elk hunting out West.

Here's how they handled it at lambing time. Oden Thompson would check the ewes in the morning, four or five o'clock, before he went off. One of the boys would look in at them about seven. After Jean Thompson got the kids off to school, she'd go out to the barns—usually about nine. She'd have the care of the ewes during the day. At 9:30 that evening, Oden'd check them just before he went to bed. They didn't do any night checks. "If you get a ewe settled down at night and don't disturb her—just come in kind of quiet—they'll usually wait until morning. Then they get excited thinking about feeding, and you'll get your lambs then."

Oden Thompson paid \$425 for the Leader Ram. Leader 877 was the Re-

serve Grand Champion—the second place sheep of all the sheep at the Eastern Stud Ram Sale. It was the most money the Thompsons ever paid for a ram.

*That ram put us in good shape  
but then he took us out.*

—Jean Thompson

**A**WE DIED in a small West Virginia flock, and scrapie was diagnosed. The federal vets traced the disease back to the flock she'd come from as a yearling and tracked her brothers, sisters, and flockmates through flocks in Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and New Jersey. Several bloodline sheep, including the Leader Ram, were diagnosed: scrapie. Hundreds of sheep had been exposed and were killed.

I wouldn't have wanted to be the poor SOB standing on Jean Thompson's porch, explaining that Leader 877, their ram that'd died a month ago, had probably died of scrapie, and that meant the government was going to destroy her 159 sheep, and they'd reimburse her, half the value, and she or Mr. Thompson would have to go pick up all the lambs they'd sold just last week and have them killed too, and they'd have to be buried right there on the Thompson farm; none of them could be sold for slaughter because of some cannibal disease in New Guinea.

### NOTICE!

*Mr. and Mrs. Oden Thompson and sons regret to notify the public that they are no longer in the Suffolk sheep business due to the fact that a purchased stud ram whose bloodline was a suspect of scrapie (a rare and slow-acting virus) not scabie. The federal government has depopulated our flock and disposed of them on our farm.*

*Thank you for your patronage in the past.*

—Pendleton (W. Va.) Times  
May 27, 1976

**A**N ORPHAN LAMB was walking around in the Thompson's living room. Two, three weeks old, maybe a foot-and-a-half high, maybe twenty-five pounds. Milk from its last feeding smeared around its mouth. It was nib-



ling on Jean Thompson's rug.

"I guess I better take him with me," she said, and she scooped up the lamb and we drove where the flock was pastured and they were bulldozing the hole.

A terrific day. The sun had just burnt the dew off the grass and the birds carrying on and the occasional rumbling of a truck on the highway across the river.

The Thompsons' farm lies across the bottom of a narrow mountain valley and the woods come down to meet the pasture on this side of the river. Yellows and greens.

There's quite a gang of us: Mrs. Thompson, her best girlfriend, Davey Thompson (age two), and a neighbor boy who's come along to help.

There's quite a gang of them: three vets, two assistants, and the dozer operator leaning against his D-6.

Oden Thompson hadn't come. He could not witness it.

The lamb is bopping along behind us, more interested in the grass than a young Davey who's trying to play with him.

Mrs. Jean Thompson has the kind of face that likes to laugh, and she's laughing now, though she's crying too and laughing at herself for crying.

The pit looks like the foundation for a narrow swimming pool, about eight feet deep at one end and the shallows at the other.

"We've got eighty-five big ones, and those lambs'd go 100 pounds. How're they all going to fit in that?"

"They compact."

The vets in their coveralls and high rubber boots mixing up the curare. It's cheaper in powder form."

Talking soft. Stringing the snow fence around the rim of the pit. The hunk of the mallet on the steel posts.

"How do they . . . they die?"

"Three to five minutes. They usually just walk off and lie down. A little muscle tremor."

Someone arriving in a pickup. "Now you watch out! Don't you run over that lamb back there!"

And so she got the bucket and changed the handle against the side, TAK, TAK, TAK, TAK, and called out, "Sheeby, sheeby, sheeby," and the flock came out of the woods, on the run, probably thinking—like Jean Thompson said—that they were just going to get wormed.

Running, the lambs kicking up their heels, and we got behind them and

swung the snow fence across the opening and closed them in. Mrs. Thompson went home. Once she'd gone, a vet picked up the orphan lamb and tossed him in with the rest. He stayed up at the shallow end near us. Like most orphan lambs, he liked people more than sheep.

And the bleats: the mothers to lambs; the lambs calling back.

They're beautiful, healthy-looking sheep. Neat, fat, their back wool slightly ridged, like corduroy, from the clippers at their last shearing.

And we sort out a bunch, and Dr. Hess starts hitting them with the needle. He's got one of those automatic syringes and he jabs them in the rump and when the needle retracts it sounds like a zipper going up. Zip, zip, zip, and the birds and the distant trucks and the sheep fold their legs under them and lie down and die.

After a while, Dr. Hess quits doing the killing. He's just getting over the flu, and he doesn't feel too good. A younger vet, Dr. Miller, who looks a little like the early James Dean in white coveralls—he takes over, zip, zip, zip.

There's a pretty good mound of bodies in the pit, and it's hard to walk because they shift under your feet like balloons full of bones and jelly.

And it's hot. And it's fierce. And the jokes are fierce too: "You savin' that pretty ewe for somethin'? I've got a pair of hip boots in my truck."

Swallowing noises from the dying sheep. The curare paralyzes their diaphragms. They suffocate.

"A man get hit by that needle, he wouldn't last no longer than sheep do. You don't think I'd be down here with him jabbing unless I trusted him?"

The sheep have gone quiet. Standing around, quite docile, the mothers aren't calling for their lambs anymore, and they don't go near the bodies.

"Get that ram again."

"He's had his dose. He's just chewin' on it."

When it's done, there are too many sheep in the shallow end to be properly covered, so we throw them deeper into the pit. Some of them are very heavy and it takes two of us. The orphan lamb is light.

And the operator starts his dozer. Dr. Miller climbs out of the pit and wipes his face with the back of his hand and he's quite angry.

"It's not a very nice job," he said. "I don't care for it." □

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# THE MYTH OF AN ADVERSARY PRESS

Journalist as bureaucrat

by Tom Bethell

IT HAS BECOME a commonplace, I know, to say that the recent Presidential campaign demonstrated the increasingly indistinguishable nature of media and government, to say that it has become impossible, finally, to discern that "the campaign" means anything more than the coverage of the campaign; and it is almost superfluous to point out, because it is done so often, that the media grow more powerful with every passing day, in inverse ratio to the ever-declining strength of the political parties themselves. But these points, well known as they are, exemplify the more general point that I want to make—one that is not so often pointed out—that the news media have now become a part of the government in all but formal constitutional ratification of the fact. For all intents and purposes, the *New York Times* or CBS News can best be understood as departments of the federal bureaucracy.

I do not wish to adopt an accusatory tone—to speak with the voice of Spiro Agnew. It may well be that the new media-government alliance is a good one, all things considered. It is almost certainly unavoidable, given the technology upon which it relies. It is, however, a new combination—one that could not have been foreseen by the framers of the Constitution—and my concern is simply to try and describe it, not an easy task, given that media and government alternately dance together in close embrace, and break apart to make confusing gestures of mutual defiance. Much of the time what we are witnessing is the equivalent of a marathon dance, in which media and government lean on each other because they need each other to survive and prosper.

Their partnership gives rise to strange illusions. One begins to suspect that things

aren't quite as they seem in the phantasmagoria of the electronic screen, in the endless droning of the nightly news, which threatens to make media junkies of us all, primed for the fix of crisis, and its attendant escalation of interest and receptiveness to media soothsayers. Take Watergate, for example, that peculiar succession of events leading nowhere but to the creation of more or less salable images. Monotonously one reads in the columns of such contemporary pundits as Joseph Kraft and Anthony Lewis that Watergate was a "crisis," so much so that one begins to suspect that they have some personal stake in the matter: the crisis from which they helped to rescue us. They remind us of the crisis of Vietnam and the crisis of Watergate, which led to a general disenchantment with politicians and a loss of faith in government, and more. But I do not believe that Watergate was a crisis at all.

I feel this way because I don't know one person who didn't thoroughly enjoy it from beginning to end. Friends of mine were carrying portable televisions to work so as not to miss any of the fun. Surely it was a melodrama, not a crisis. A surprisingly bloodless melodrama. There were no victims of Watergate, save a number of people in the White House, and a few other odd characters, such as G. Gordon Liddy, still in jail. But most of them seem to be ending up with books on the best-seller lists, with publishing, television, and movie "deals." With media deals, that is. And the journalists didn't do too badly out of Watergate, either. Don't forget that. More and more, in retrospect, Watergate seems to have involved a nearly invisible sleight of hand, which deftly transmuted what may not have been so very far from government-as-usual into "crisis" into lecture-circuit

*Tom Bethell, a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly, becomes with this issue a Washington editor of Harper's.*





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appearances and Book-of-the-Month Club success for all hands involved.

How, then, did it happen? Why is it that the media now seem so often to assume the role of provoking this or that "crisis," which may be only apparent? The conventional answer, I know, is that the news media's job is to police the government, to keep it honest, to blow the whistle, to defend the people's right to know, to stand watchfully on the ramparts of freedom and democracy. But that strikes me as being comparable to a good magician's patter—designed to distract.

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On the sidelines

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**W**HAT IS THE FIRST thing one notices about the performance of the media today? (By media let me stress I mean the Big Media: the three television networks, the two wire services, *Time* and *Newsweek*, and a handful of newspapers whose influence is disproportionately greater than their circulation, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.) I believe the most important element in their handling of the news is something that one is at first in danger of not noticing at all, because it is so reasonable-seeming and all-pervasive: I refer to the way in which the news organizations in question are above all relentlessly and strenuously impartial in their presentation of political events. They don't take sides. Having chosen the only important side—that of big government and all its works—the media can affect an olympian stance with regard to mere squabbling of factions.

Coming to Washington as I did, just over a year after President Nixon's resignation, I think I half expected to find the *Washington Post* a thinly disguised house organ for the Democratic party, reminiscent of the old days when most newspapers were controlled by this or that political party. I could not have been more wrong. During the Presidential campaign, for example, it was impossible to detect any bias in the *Post*'s news columns, and there was scarcely any in the editorials, either. The televised debates, for example, were always followed by photographs of the two candidates that were scrupulously identical in position and size. The same was true of headlines. As for the *Post*'s final "endorsement," it was so carefully balanced as to be ineffectual.

This "objectivity" of the Big Media is so carefully sustained that, I believe, an intelligent observer coming to this country from a far-off land might well conclude, after a good deal of puzzlement, that the government itself

ran the entire publicity apparatus here, and in deference to the people's will, did so in a spirit of scrupulous fair-mindedness. (Editors might well be appointed to their positions in the Media Branch of government after they had shown the requisite degree of wisdom and impartiality in one of the other branches, much as judges are appointed in fact.)

In the case of television, of course, such a judgment would not be so far from the truth inasmuch as the impartiality of television news is dictated by the Fairness Doctrine of the Federal Communications Commission, which is to say, by the government. This is one of the most striking counter-examples to the First Amendment decree that the government "shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press," but media people as a rule do not quibble with it, although at other times they find the First Amendment as compelling and unalterable as the Ten Commandments.

They do well not to quibble. The Fairness Doctrine, and the resulting equitable treatment of the news, result in all manner of unsuspected but delightful benefits to the media, and, less conspicuously to the government. Perhaps most important, the media instantly appear clothed in the robes of judicial impartiality—not as snapping prosecutor, harranguing defender. Not as being anti-Ford, anti-Carter, but as above the dirty political battle entirely. Walter Cronkite, it has often been said, has a credibility exceeding that of Presidents. As a result, he is from time to time urged to run for office himself. But he has sensibly declined, no doubt appreciating the extent to which his credibility stems from his position as umpire, not participant.

No doubt the influential newspapers assumed their present guise of impartiality as a result of the example provided by television. How much better, after all, to be perceived as impartial than as being the captive of this or that party. That is precisely what makes a newspaper influential. (Incidentally, the widespread, and I believe largely erroneous, public perception of the *Washington Post* as the nemesis of Richard Nixon may have been nice for the paper's immediate prestige and profits; but it had, I believe, a secondary and undesirable backlash in giving it the appearance of partisanship.)

Thus the "fairness" of the media automatically sets the media up as judges, but as judges of what? Not, as it turns out, of the political issues themselves, because to adjudicate such issues would inevitably result in the very partisanship the media above all avoids, but as judges of events that are perceived as



having moral or ethical weight, questions of character, "leadership," and personality. The political issues themselves are not ignored, of course, but they get the "equal treatment," which tends to result in a zero sum. The questions of conscience get the full treatment, with the result that last year's campaign was perceived as a series of gaffes and missteps and exposures of ethical shortcomings. In response to this there has been, I believe, a kind of moral escalation in politics, with President-elect Carter emerging as a man who was able (but barely) to be holier than the media. (He had better be careful, though, because the media don't like looking up to anyone. If it is true, as one hears, that Carter doesn't like the press, he will do well to tread warily if he is going to engage in Nixonian confrontations with it. The press loves these confrontations more than anything—while pretending to deplore them—because, as I hope to show, the mechanics of confrontation tend to confirm the press in its pose as the custodian of conscience.)

The media's broad political impartiality also tends to validate the general framework of political discourse. The "equal and opposite" placement of Ford and Carter by the same token "rationalizes" the elimination of Eugene McCarthy from the debates. The FCC's Fairness Doctrine makes "equal treatment" of alternative candidates "impossible," and so their candidacies are treated as though they were impossible by the media, which in turn really does make them impossible. So at this point government and media agree to their mutually convenient roles.

There is, however, another and a more subtle side effect of the media's neutral status. And it is here that we get close to the point where the magician's bland patter distracts us. It results in the government being perceived, by and large, as a monolithic entity, and one that is rather inclined toward wickedness and corruption (could it but get away with it), while the dispassionately critical press emerges triumphantly on the side of "the people." This has the effect of disguising the extent to which the actual evidence of corruption, when it is forthcoming, is provided by people who work for the government. As a matter of fact, the government is not monolithic at all. It wars with itself. This has always been true, but in recent years a new mechanism has played a critical role in amplifying this internal government struggling: a hidden coupling, or connection, between government and media whereby dissident opinion, contradictory evidence, hitherto "secret" documents, can appear in the hands of the media. The

precise location of this connection, namely, the identity of the leaker, according to an interpretation of the First Amendment that its beneficiaries in the media have been strenuously promoting of late, is said to be immune from government scrutiny—as sacrosanct as the confessional.

Note that the media themselves urge the secrecy and integrity of this government-to-media connection. That is because it enables them to play a role in government. It gives them what they are pleased to call "policy significance," which is better than reprinting handouts. Journalists also enjoy the considerable fringe benefits of wealth and prestige that have accrued, in some cases, as a result.

Suppose, for a minute, that the Constitution was *not* tacitly interpreted (as it now is) in such a way as to countenance secrecy between media and government. Suppose that, as a result (knowing he would soon be identified by government investigators if he spoke to the press and subsequently tried to remain anonymous) Deep Throat had early on called a press conference to explain what he told Bob Woodward about goings-on in the White House. Would we, the people, be any the worse off? Or would the losers have been Woodward, Bernstein, the *Washington Post*, the media?

**I**T WAS WATERGATE, of course, that saw the government-to-media connection working with maximum effectiveness, but we tend not to perceive it that way, because the "issue" was so rapidly and so effectively transformed into a contest between media and government: the bad guys of the government strenuously guarding their nefarious doings from view, versus the good guys of the press, the investigative journalists, who were stripping away the veils of secrecy. And yet the evidence of government corruption came from the government, either from well-placed insiders, such as Deep Throat, or from official investigators who leaked the evidence being accumulated in those investigations before their results were publicly declared. The great advantage the press had going for it was that its "policy decisions," made in an editor's office, were arrived at much more quickly than the clumsily slow formal investigations, thus enabling the press to proclaim the government's own findings ahead of government. As a result, government tended to appear indifferent to corruption within its boundaries, and the press, once again, came out looking like the savior of the republic.

This argument was lucidly presented by Edward Jay Epstein in an article in the July

**"Media and government alternately dance together in close embrace, and break apart to make confusing gestures of mutual defiance."**





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1974 issue of *Commentary* entitled "Did the Press Uncover Watergate?"

*In keeping with the mythic view of journalism, the book [All The President's Men] never describes the "behind-the-scenes" investigations which actually "smashed the Watergate scandal wide open"—namely the investigations conducted by the FBI, the federal prosecutors, the grand jury, and the Congressional committees. The work of almost all those institutions, which unearthed and developed all the actual evidence and disclosures of Watergate, is systematically ignored or minimized by Bernstein and Woodward. Instead, they simply focus on those parts of the prosecutors' case, the grand jury investigation, and the FBI reports that were leaked to them.*

It is perhaps superfluous to say that Epstein's article did nothing to alter the mythic view of journalism, which was subsequently fixed more firmly than ever by the arrival of Robert Redford and his film crew in Washington. Certainly Woodward and Bernstein have not found it necessary to answer Epstein's argument; after all, they never claimed that they broke the case open. Here, as it happens, their principal allies were Ron Ziegler and Richard Nixon, whose angry denunciations of the *Post* contributed, more than anything else, to the public perception of the *Post*, and not the federal investigators, as David taking on Goliath.

But don't forget that the "bottom line" of Watergate, to use a phrase much in vogue in Washington, was not so much the heroism of the press as: "the system worked." Thus government (together with its media dancing partner) was validated. Sure, government was shown to have its bad guys, people like Nixon, Haldeman, and Ehrlichman. (Is Ehrlichman still a bad guy? I'm not sure he is since his TV appearances promoting his book; on the other hand, perhaps he'll have to wait until he gets press credentials, like John Dean, before he is finally rehabilitated.) But it also had its good guys: Sam Ervin and Archibald Cox and Elliot Richardson. So once again we have—within government—a kind of zero sum, a trade-off, which is not so easily seen because of the sleight of hand of "crisis." In the end, the government is fine, thanks to the media; and the men in the media are heroes, thanks to their relationship with government.

When the business of leaking is discussed, with its implication of something new afoot, the gentlemen of the media are apt to reply: hold on a minute. Ever since newspapers emerged as significant molders of public opinion, the government has adopted the habit of testing the waters of that opinion by leaking news—

even including classified documents (e.g., to persuade the public that the nation's defenses need beefing up). The history of the press release, and the activities of the government press agent, are trotted out on these occasions, as are Herbert Hoover's successful public-relations work on behalf of his department while he was Secretary of Commerce. And, of course, high government officials have long made a practice of dining with media dignitaries and passing on gossip which, when published a few days later in the *New York Times*, amounts to a semiofficial statement of government policy, although the source of the information is not named.

All this is perfectly true, of course, and it is still going on. But my point here is that in the last few years the media have succeeded in sharply increasing their policy significance, and they have done this above all *not* by promulgating "official" government views, but "unofficial" or dissident ones.

Tapping into government at middle levels was not a calculated strategy on the part of the press, however. The most fundamental premise of Washington journalists has always been that the journalist desires to be a partner in power, not a mere observer on the sidelines, and this has always been best accomplished by fraternizing with government figures who are as highly placed as possible—best of all, the President; or his closest advisers; or the Secretary of State. To have such sources is to be an "insider," which is what almost everyone in Washington wants to be. It is interesting to note how often this word appears on the dust jackets of memoirs by Washington journalists. But Nixon—his great weakness!—didn't like journalists and wouldn't let them be insiders. James Reston was kept at arm's length, his wise counsel not sought. Kissinger, on the other hand, was astute enough to cultivate the press, and he survived—not merely that, was lionized as "the wizard of shuttle diplomacy." (Is it not possible that the most awesome "lesson of Watergate," when the dust of crisis has finally settled, will be a social lesson?)

So the columnists and White House correspondents began to appear ineffectual, and it wasn't long before the lower-level excavations—meetings with government personnel in living rooms, coffee shops, and *garages*—began to take the place of equally confidential dinner parties in Georgetown.

But the lower-level tap into government turned out to have even more to be said for it than the top-echelon meetings of the minds. It set up an antagonism with the top levels of government (and, it's worth recalling, with some Upper Media people, who at first dis-



dained the enthusiasms of police reporters), and thus enabled editors to assume a role indistinguishable from that of Cabinet members—that is, it enabled them to formulate (in the public prints) alternative policy. And since it has been shown, in recent years, that in the ensuing drama of confrontation (which itself becomes the biggest story of all) the government tends to look prone to deception, and the media merely in favor of openness, the media rather handily win the contest for public sympathy and so emerge not merely as a quasi branch of government, but as a branch that is, in the event of confrontation, rather more powerful than any other branch.

### Questions of policy

SEVERAL CONFRONTATIONS in recent years have illustrated these points, but none more plainly, or with a greater force of precedence, than the *New York Times's* publication of segments of the Pentagon Papers. The Pentagon Papers case provided the media with an opportunity to preempt government policy. It is worth recalling that the episode began when Daniel Ellsberg, a former Pentagon and RAND Corporation employee, handed copies of the Papers to Neil Sheehan, a *Times* reporter. This points up a rather neglected fact—that being an “investigative reporter,” in its most essential phase, is purely passive, a matter of being on the receiving end of a phone call, a classified document.

The Pentagon Papers had been classified top secret by the Executive Branch, and since publishing them would be equivalent to declassifying them, the *Times's* editors found themselves immediately faced with a decision normally made by government. In order to make this decision, the paper instituted a proceeding that can only be described as the newsroom Cabinet meeting—one of the most striking developments in the media in recent years. Sanford Ungar, in his book *The Papers and the Papers*, provides an interesting account of these meetings, although without fully seeming to realize the extent to which he was describing the usurpation of government function by the media. Ungar notes that the *Times's* foreign editor, James L. Greenfield, “a man with State Department experience during the Kennedy Administration,” was given “overall charge of the assignment,” which, in accordance with the media’s imitation of government, was given the bureaucratic code name “Project X.” He quotes Greenfield as follows: “What I tried to do from the very

beginning, and what Abe [Rosenthal] wanted me to do . . . was really to revert back *as if I was in the government*, what would I think [of the material] and the consequences of publication.” (My italics.) In effect, of course, Greenfield *was* once again in the government.

Later on, after a court injunction had temporarily stopped the *Times's* series on the Papers, the *Washington Post* got them and they immediately began *their* newsroom Cabinet meeting, although this time, as Ungar notes, “The *Post's* decision-making processes took place in the living room and an adjoining library in [executive editor Ben] Bradlee’s house.” He added that “in its own assessment of how to avoid endangering national security, the *Post* made a *policy decision* not to quote any diplomatic or military cables fully and not to name any CIA agents.” (My italics.) And as Ben Bagdikian, a press critic who resembles many press critics in often seeming more like a press cheerleader, would later write: “They were competent judges of what was dangerous to the country and what was not; they handled this kind of information every day.”

So there it was. Editors, feeling that they had the “competence” to override the government, overrode it. Later on the Supreme Court upheld this new relationship between the press and the government, with only Justice John Harlan taking due note of the new constitutional arrangement. (Chief Justice Warren Burger and Justice Harry Blackmun sided with Harlan’s dissent, but on issues that seem to have been essentially irrelevant to the constitutional question at hand.)

Harlan noted—and it is surely hard to refute him on “strict” constitutional grounds—that the Executive Branch’s determination of what should be considered secret deserves preference over the media’s determination. “Even if there is some room for the Judiciary to override the Executive determination,” he wrote, “it is plain that the scope of review must be exceedingly narrow. I can see no indication in the opinions of either the District Court or the Court of Appeals in the *Post* litigation that the conclusions of the Executive were given even the deference owing to an administrative agency, much less that owing to a co-equal branch of government operating within the field of its constitutional prerogative.”

In practice, however, the problem with this argument is that the Constitution has a way of meaning whatever public opinion wants it to mean, and by the time the Pentagon Papers case had arrived at the Supreme Court, the opposition of the government to the publication of the Papers had had the effect of amplifying

**“The actual evidence of corruption is provided by people who work for the government. The government is not monolithic at all. It wars with itself.”**





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the story enormously within the echo chambers of the media, which operate at maximum volume when opposition to media policies exists.

Once again Sanford Ungar was perhaps unconsciously revealing when he wrote about the Pentagon Papers struggle:

*Hand in hand with elation at the Post was a sense of anticipation for any government moves against the newspaper. Although legal action would be expensive and potentially threatening, half the excitement of the story had become the Times's confrontation with the government over freedom of the press; the case before Judge Gurfein was already a major front-page story in the Post. No one at the Post was saying it publicly, but the editors—and especially Bradlee, who delights in a good fight—would have been disappointed if the Justice Department had not dragged their newspaper into court too.*

Precisely. The opposition of government not merely has the effect of intensifying the story—causing it to resonate in the media echo chamber with melodramatic denials, rebuttals, and injunctions—it also has the effect of changing it to one of government secrecy versus the people's right to know, and in this confrontation the media must always triumph, because they have securely in their grasp the means of forming a public opinion sympathetic to their cause.

An ironic, although probably accurate, comment on all this has been made by Sen. J. William Fulbright. Noting the media's "unwholesome preoccupation with the apprehension of wrongdoers . . . an excess of emphasis on personalities but short shrift for significant policy questions," such as, he went on to say, some detente hearings the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had recently held, Fulbright said that "the Foreign Relations Committee's chief of staff suggested that the Committee had made a mistake in holding the detente hearings in public; if we had held them in closed session and leaked the transcripts, the press would have covered them generously."

This may well have been true, although the focus of the story would have been in danger of shifting once again to the dire matter of secrecy in government rather than the original issue of detente. But the story would nevertheless have been duly amplified (especially if Fulbright had kept up the pretense to the extent of kicking up a fuss about the publication of the transcripts), and a big story would have emerged, with, no doubt, a new superstar in the form of the "investigative reporter" who had been on the receiving end of the leak.

ANOTHER INSTANCE IN WHICH media executives chose to override a branch of government is the recent and widely celebrated Daniel Schorr case. It seems appropriate to so dub it, because Schorr's confrontation with Congress rapidly became a more urgent issue than the actual contents of the Pike Report dealing with CIA activities, which Congress had voted, by a 2-to-1 margin, not to release. But by then Dan Schorr, then of CBS, had made the necessary connection with someone (we are not allowed to ask whom) in government, so that he had a copy of the report in his hands. He transmitted it to Clay Felker, the publisher of *The Village Voice*, and after one more newsroom Cabinet meeting—this one, it must be said, perfunctory by the standards of the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* (Felker admitted, for example, that he just flipped through the report)—the report was published by *The Village Voice*, with accompanying fanfare.

The Congress was understandably rather miffed by this preemption of its function and set about finding the leaker—a dreadful thing to do, we were swiftly reminded by many in the press. When it became clear that the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct really was going to call Schorr to testify under oath, a press conference was called by the Newspaper Guild (in the Rayburn House Office Building), telegrams from Walter Cronkite and Barbara Walters and John Chancellor and Roger Mudd and many more were flourished, petitions were circulated, and "in person" appearances by such media celebrities as Dan Rather, Carl Bernstein, Seymour Hersh, and Mary McGrory were arranged. With them at the table sat a couple of legislators—Sen. Alan Cranston and Rep. H. John Heinz—which only strengthened one's impression that media and government had become one. This was further reinforced when several journalists started out by exclaiming how uncomfortable they felt sitting on the "wrong" side of the cameras.

What these people might very well have said, but did not, was that they had been doing very nicely thank you under the present system of government-as-media and media-as-government, and preferred that the arrangement not be disturbed. They spoke instead on a well-worn theme, the dangers of government secrecy, the folly of Congress, and the desirability of an informed public. Mary McGrory, looking weary from her long battles with government iniquity, said, "It's pretty obvious we can't stop the House of Representatives from making idiots of themselves." Seymour Hersh remarked that "Congress is being ludicrous



here, and double dealing, and hypocritical." No one so much as whispered that perhaps Hersh himself was being hypocritical, given the extent to which he has been the beneficiary of the system.

Dan Schorr held fast the next day before the glare of the television lights. The Congressmen succeeded only in appearing as anachronistic as the Spanish Inquisition. Secrecy in media was preserved. Schorr proclaimed his right not to name his source, and even went so far as to suggest that the entire operations of the newsroom—meaning, of course, newsroom Cabinet meetings—were constitutionally immune from government scrutiny.

The outcome was typical of such events in recent years. The committee declined, wisely, to pursue Schorr any further (this would merely have placed the story in the loudest echo chamber at the media's disposal) but wrote a report which included these surely uncontroversial sentiments:

*News men, just like anyone else, are not infallible in their judgments of what is right or wrong, good or bad for our nation. The mere assertion by a newsman that he revealed some government secret "for the good of the country" does not insure the country actually will benefit. . . . The fact is, the news media frequently do not possess sufficient information on which to make a prudent decision on whether the revelation of a secret will help or harm. We suggest caution and discretion should be the watchwords.*

Not exactly fighting words, you would think. But in a column that by the normal standards of press criticism was indeed critical, the *Washington Post's* ombudsman Charles B. Seib noted that there was a "bristling reaction" to these "mild words." The Associated Press said the committee made a "broad attack on the news media." UPI said the report "castigated" the news media, and "lectured media reporters on their First Amendment responsibilities." The *New York Times* mentioned the advice to the media only in the context of Rep. Thomas S. Foley's demurrer, which found it "unnecessary and gratuitous." The *Washington Post* ignored entirely what the committee had said about the news media.

And what happened to Daniel Schorr? He, Charles Seib noted, "has gone off to the earthly heaven of the modern martyr: lush lecture fees, a book contract and adoring academia."

It is, surely, simply absurd to claim that the framers of the Constitution intended anything like this to happen, notwithstanding the tendency by newsmen of late to place some such interpretation on the First Amendment. As a

counterbalance to this propaganda—there is no other word for it—perhaps we should recall some remarks about the press made by Thomas Jefferson in a letter, written in 1803, to Governor McKean of Pennsylvania. Jefferson was upset at the time because he considered the credibility of the press was being undermined by "its licentiousness and its lying," and that the best solution to the problem might be "a few prosecutions of the most prominent offenders. . . . Not a general prosecution, for that would look like persecution; but a select one."

The media today, of course, no more resemble the press of Jefferson's day than an atom bomb resembles a platoon of barefoot militia, so the appropriate interpretation of the First Amendment is, as it were, up for grabs; and, because they very largely control public opinion with the same channels of communication that they use to present the news, the news media have done a very effective job of imposing an interpretation that is congenial to them. This interpretation may be briefly summarized as follows: in the media's dealings with government, secrecy is good; but in the government's internal dealings, secrecy is bad.

It is interesting to note that in what is, I believe, the only reference to the press in the *Federalist Papers*, Alexander Hamilton wrote: "What is liberty of the press? Who can give it any definition which would not leave the utmost latitude for evasion? I hold it to be impracticable; and from this I infer that its security, whatever fine declarations may be inserted in any Constitution respecting it, must altogether depend on public opinion," an opinion which must encourage quiet smiles of satisfaction among those people who own or control the means of producing public opinion.

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### Government by the media

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**A**LTHOUGH WE CLEARLY do now have something very close to a new system of government, in which editors holding the equivalent of oversight Cabinet meetings have left the pamphleteers with portable presses ("No Taxation Without Representation!") very far behind, it is not so clear that our present system is thereby a bad one. It is preferable, surely, to the British system, under which, for example, sternly upheld libel laws prohibited publication of damaging information about the drug Thalidomide. There is not even any question that it is better than the press of the totalitarian regimes. By and large it is no doubt true that the "policy decisions" of our prominent editors and media executives

**"In the confrontation between media and government the media must always triumph, because they have the means of forming a public opinion sympathetic to their cause."**



Elena Pavlov



Tom Bethell  
THE MYTH  
OF AN  
ADVERSARY  
PRESS

are responsibly arrived at, even if not constitutionally foreseen. The *New York Times's* decision to declassify (in effect) the Pentagon Papers was almost certainly more thoughtfully arrived at than the Executive's decision to classify them in the first place. It may even have been better to publish the Pike Report than not, although one retains an uneasy suspicion that such a conclusion might be more strongly championed by the circulation manager of *The Village Voice* and a few hard-faced men in the Kremlin, than by "the people," who are probably more willing to forgo their "right to know" in some instances than our crop of investigative reporters would wish.

The tendency of journalists to "dig" for corruption is in itself no bad thing, of course. No one is claiming that corrupt officials are preferable to incorrupt ones. But the relentless digging also tends imperceptibly toward undermining, and toppling, given that in the new equations of power between media and government, the dramatists of the media look heroic to precisely the same degree that they can make the government appear villainous, beset by illusory crises. On the other hand, exposing government to view also inevitably tends to weaken it, and that is not necessarily a bad thing. A case can be made for it. In the end one can only conclude, with the Congressmen of the Ethics Committee, that "caution and discretion" are needed.

But what is undeniable, as a result of the recent struggles between media and government, is that the media has emerged with vastly more power. This power is not a power greater than government's, but one that is indistinguishable from it. Government and media figures are increasingly interchangeable anyway, just as their roles are symbiotic. Even their pay is comparable. And there is an ever-increasing exchange between the two camps; James Greenfield goes in one direction, Henry Wallich in the other. When Air Force One lands and a cluster of figures emerges from the plane, who is media, who is government? One group gets headlines, the other bylines. Both enjoy the same daily "fix." So a parity between the two has developed, and it is a relatively recent development. Journalists in Washington today play an ex officio policy role that would have been unrecognizable in the bad old days (recalled by some journalists with an understandable shudder of distaste) when their badge of office was a green eyeshade and a whiskey bottle on the desk. Armed, now, with a novel interpretation of the First Amendment that has shifted the locus of acceptable secrecy, they will not easily surrender their new importance. It translates into wealth and social

status, after all. Proximity to power in Washington has always conferred status, and today important journalists do not merely have proximity, they have the real thing.

Sally Quinn, who writes about Washington society for the *Washington Post*, touched on this in a recent article which managed to give a more revealing picture of the press than most press critics ever achieve. Discussing the "ins and outs of Carter's Washington" she wrote:

*The press in general feels that no matter who wins or loses, the politicians will be gone in four or eight years, and they, the press, will be around forever. So they don't care how they fit in. It will be nice to make friends and cultivate sources, but there is a real anticipation of a new adversary relationship. The Carter types resent the press. Not the way Nixon did, but they feel the press is "snotty," has gotten out of hand and needs to be put in its place. But the press is big socially in Washington these days, and Carter needs the press. There will be tentative mutual cultivation here.*

I formed much the same impression some months ago when I went to the Kennedy Center in Washington for the premiere of the film *America at the Movies*. The party that was held beforehand somehow managed to dramatize much that I have been trying to say. The guest list had been broken down into a number of categories: Senate, House of Representatives, Supreme Court, Administration, Hollywood, Media. An occasional Hollywood figure would come strolling by, complete with retinue. Here and there an inconspicuous Administration figure or two might have been noticed by the alert observer. Congressmen and Senators were, it seemed, disconsolately munching popcorn in quiet corners of the room, when they could be recognized at all. (Was that Senator McIntyre? J. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana? Did it matter?)

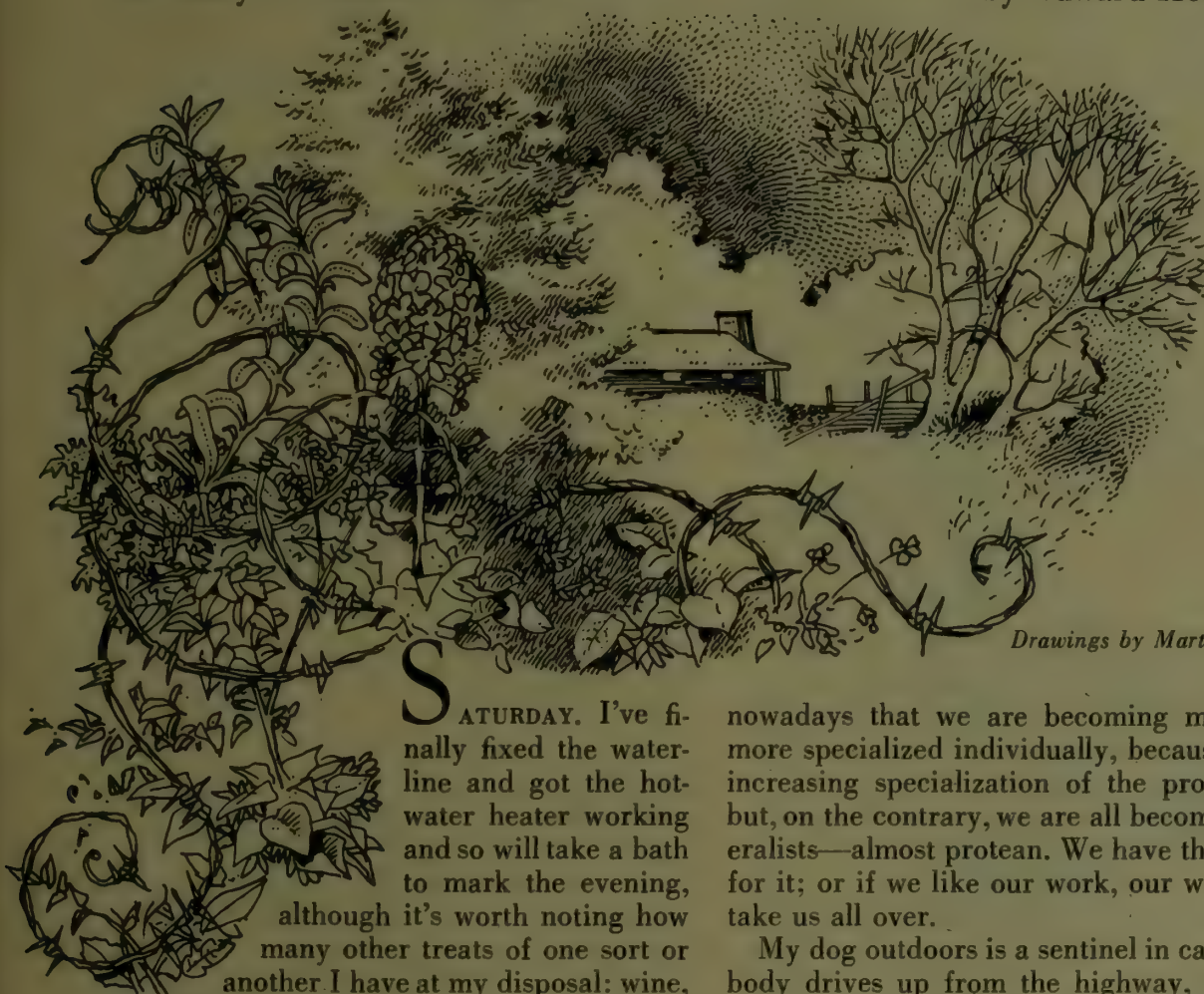
But, ah, here in the very center of the room was a pair of familiar faces, ringed by a crowd which seemed to be keeping a respectful distance. Woodward of the *Post* and Schorr of CBS were engaged in earnest conversation. The keepers of the secrets? They were the center of attention. True, a Kissinger or a Moynihan could have competed on equal terms, but the media, on this occasion, held our undivided attention. What, one wondered, were Woodward and Schorr discussing? A loud band at the end of the room prevented one from hearing much of anything, but one felt it would be imprudent to overhear so much as a word of *this* particular conversation, lest one accidentally become privy to . . . how best to describe it? . . . state secrets! □



# THE RIDGE-SLOPE FOX AND THE KNIFE THROWER

An essay in narrative form

by Edward Hoagland



Drawings by Martin Avillez

SATURDAY. I've finally fixed the water-line and got the hot-water heater working and so will take a bath to mark the evening, although it's worth noting how many other treats of one sort or another I have at my disposal: wine, beer, vodka, whiskey, coffee, chocolate for cocoa, maple syrup, honey, jam, apple cider, just for starters. The pioneer whose cellar hole in the bramble patch I dig in occasionally for Castoria bottles and other curios might have had only a little sugar for his nightly tea and maybe a spare ounce of vanilla to spike his spring water for solace. He was a logger, down from New Brunswick, to judge from the lettering on the chemists' bottles, and had no lemon juice, no freeze-dried cubes of chicken broth or lamb tongues in Australian aspic to pique his palate. It is sometimes announced

nowadays that we are becoming more and more specialized individually, because of the increasing specialization of the professions, but, on the contrary, we are all becoming generalists—almost protean. We have the leisure for it; or if we like our work, our work may take us all over.

My dog outdoors is a sentinel in case somebody drives up from the highway, a rather formidable route until the road commissioner makes his yearly pass with the grader—although of course, contrary to appearances, I *want* someone to come. Loneliness is my middle name just at the moment. Having driven for eight hours from the city in order to be alone, I'm "dying" of loneliness; can't seem to live with people or live without them. Lovers in comedies shout at each other, "I'll never speak to you again!" and the most abbreviated bout of lovemaking is much more cheering than masturbation. This need we have to talk continually, to rub or at least

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*Edward Hoagland is the author of seven books, most recently Red Wolves and Black Bears.*



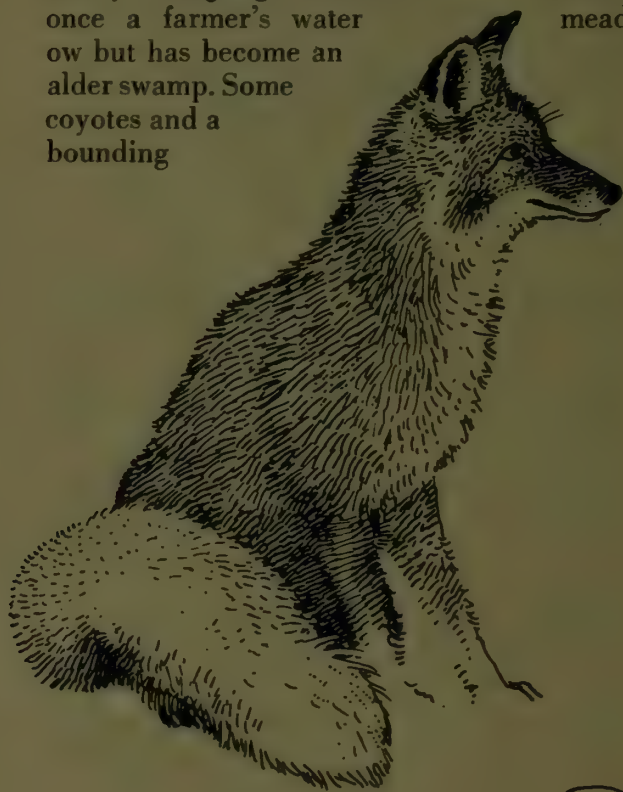
bump shoulders, is of substantial significance. An anthropologist might claim the habit of keeping company has been graven into us as social creatures as a survival mechanism and isn't in some sense a matter of immortality—soul next to soul. Perhaps, indeed, it isn't, but the fascination is that it *might be*.

A New York City editor has asked me for an article about "the invigorating effects of silence," and yet I sometimes find silence enervating, and play the radio so much I fall asleep with it still playing. These cutover New England woods are bilingual when they do speak, as when one stumbles over an ancient scrap of reddish barbed wire bound around a line of pasture birches now lost in a new wilderness of outlaw growth. The sugaring trails are all but effaced, and isolated, suffering apple trees, bloomless lately, are slowly strangling to death in what was once a farmer's water meadow but has become an alder swamp. Some coyotes and a bounding

white wolf-sized wild dog live here in this brief interval between the rival epochs of farming and of summer-home development.

In the silence in the house one hears the drumming-ticking of the stove and an oven-bird's or veery's song. The wind sounds like the brook and the brook like the wind, though by the way that the dog tilts his head I can infer the presence of a deer in the clump of poplars below the house. It would all be very well, except that the birds give their best voice at dawn and the deer—a barren doe whose fortunes I have followed for years (she is lonely herself)—only comes down off my neighbor's land to mine to feed at six P.M., which leaves a lot of time to kill, and I'm a city man and life is short to me.

City people try to buy time as a rule, when they can't, whereas country people are prepared to kill time, although both try to cherish in their mind's eye the notion of a better life ahead. Country people do not behave as if they think life is short; they live on the principle that it is long, savoring variations of the kind best appreciated if most days are the same. City people crowd life when they have the chance; and it is nonsense to sup-





pose that they have become "less observant," less alert than old-time country people were. Even that pioneer, whose lumpy, sharp-roofed log house I have a photo of, and who listened each morning for the location of his big neighbor, the bear, was not more on his toes than the Los Angeles denizens who, four abreast and tailgating, drive the Santa Monica Freeway at seventy miles an hour. His hearing and eyesight may have been better, but the city-dweller, it should be borne in mind, wears out his eyes and ears from encountering so much so fast.

Country people tend to consider that they have a corner on righteousness and to distrust most manifestations of cleverness, while people in the city are leery of righteousness but ascribe to themselves all manner of cleverness. The countryman in the

meantime, however—at least in my experience—drops in his tracks from a coronary just as promptly and endures his full share of ulcers and nervous attacks, so that his famous procrastination, which is as characteristic a tendency as his righteousness, does him little concrete good. Whether it's the local lawyer you have business with, or the carpenter, the highway engineer, a nearby farmer with a tractor, the delays almost defy belief. Conventionally, most of us, both in the city and the country, say, oh, they enjoy life more upstate and so naturally they work slower. More often, instead of that, it's the undifferentiated outlook they take toward work. Not that there is some fuzzy idea abroad in the country that every farmer is as good as any other farmer. But a cow is finally just a cow, a chore is after all a chore, there is small possibility of what is called in the city "advancement," and so many hard chores remain to be performed in a long lifetime that, even allowing for the satisfactions of craftsmanship, if you keep putting some of them off you may get away with having to do fewer of them in the end.



**W**HAT THE COUNTRYMAN does frequently possess is a face more content with middle age; and this is an important phenomenon to try to





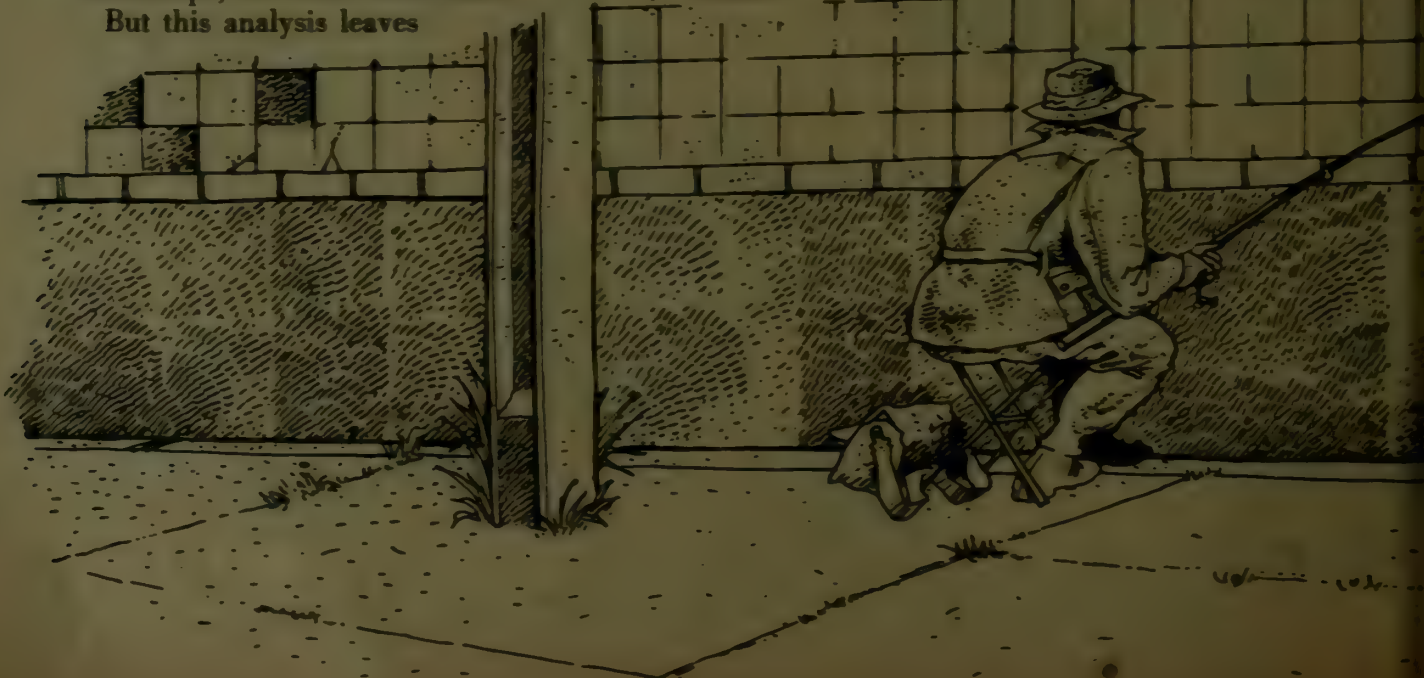
understand, because one of the central questions—central in the sense that if we could ever answer it we'd know a lot—is why our faces lose so much of the hopefulness apparent in photographs taken around the age of nineteen. On our deathbeds, in the last throes of death, a strangely convinced, calm, smiling hopefulness will capture our faces once again, if we are like most people, displacing the anxiety and pain that had been there and astonishing the relatives left behind. But, in between, why is it “heartbreaking,” as both my wife and mother like to say, to look at somebody's picture from when he or she was young instead of middle-aged? It scarcely matters who is pictured; a sorrowful, protective feeling sweeps over us as we look at his face then: “little did he know.”

The sag, the defeatism of the mouth, the calloused look about the eyes are not merely an instance of tissue wear and tear, and because older people in the country wear the same expressions that city people do when they get old, it may be that country folk, leading a life of less density, simply require longer to reach a similar point. Certainly the tenacity of grudges here in the country would indicate that life is slower rather than necessarily happier here. My insurance agent hasn't said a pleasant word to me for six years because of a tiff we had, whereas no city man in his right mind would expend such a supply of bile on a single small affair; he'd have too many in hand. The finality of feuds implies a finality to life's possibilities too: a barn tying sixty-five cattle, 135 acres in pasturage and hay, a muddling spouse, four chubby children, seven good friendships, and three keen feuds.

But this analysis leaves

out the sweetness of the mornings here, the mists swirling above the pond, the whap of a beaver's tail as you walk by, and what the postman means when he says he's “a rabbit hunter and a horned-pout fisherman.” He means that he's not after bear or salmon; and he turned down the postmaster's job a couple of years ago for good measure, so that they had to bring in an outsider. Your true city man and countryman have become rare birds, in any case. Mostly now it's shopping malls, and the confusion is compounded by the fact that, with the fanaticism of the convert, some of the most determined urbanites are really country boys who have fled from their boyhoods in the country, and many an overalled bumpkin maneuvering a rototiller is chewing up two or three decades of city memories as he goes.

I get out of my car after the drive of eight hours, unbutton my fly, and piss on the lawn with a rich complex of feelings. The raccoons that very night take note that I have regained possession. In the country you know when your neighbor wakes up in the morning because smoke starts to waft up from his chimney. And we will always have that—those who want it. The mountain I look up at is 300 million years old—late Devonian, when the amphibians were making news—but comes complete with chatter marks gouged by the sole of the last glacier only 20,000 years ago. Up top live black-poll warblers and golden-crowned kinglets that would fit the stunted spruces of a timberline more to the north or much higher, and I am proud we have them. Still, the silence preys



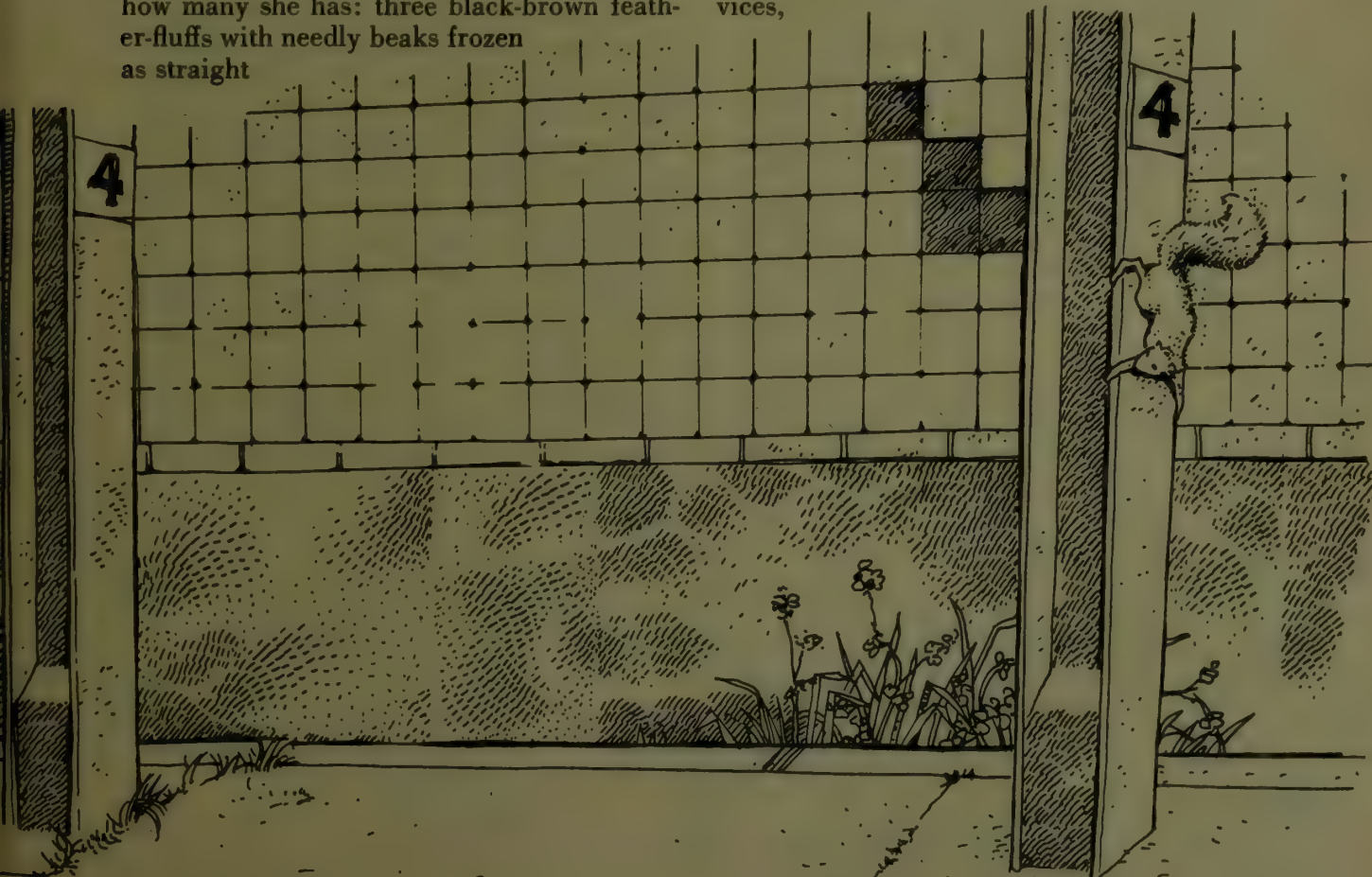


at times like noise, with the difference only that noise in its destructive impact is physiological and silence is harmless until the mind exfoliates ogres from it. Silence is exhilarating at first—as noise is—but there is a sweetness to silence outlasting exhilaration, akin to the sweetness of listening and the velvet of sleep. Particularly listening, because we listen for what we live for, which is to say, love and the peace of love and spontaneous joy. Maybe they never materialize, but the wood warbler's *wee* cry, the hiss of the Coleman lantern at night are bridges of the sort that get us by meanwhile. It delights me to realize that right now a brown trout is filling her white belly with spring peepers a mile down the road—I like frogs' legs also—and that the glossy black sow bear who lives across the way has produced her biennial pair of cubs, to judge by the prints in the mud. At some point in the summer I'll put them up a tree and hear their peacock cries to her and her angry chuffing at me. Like the doe, she comes down to my bog to feed and I'm happy to pay the taxes on it so that, in this day and age, she can.

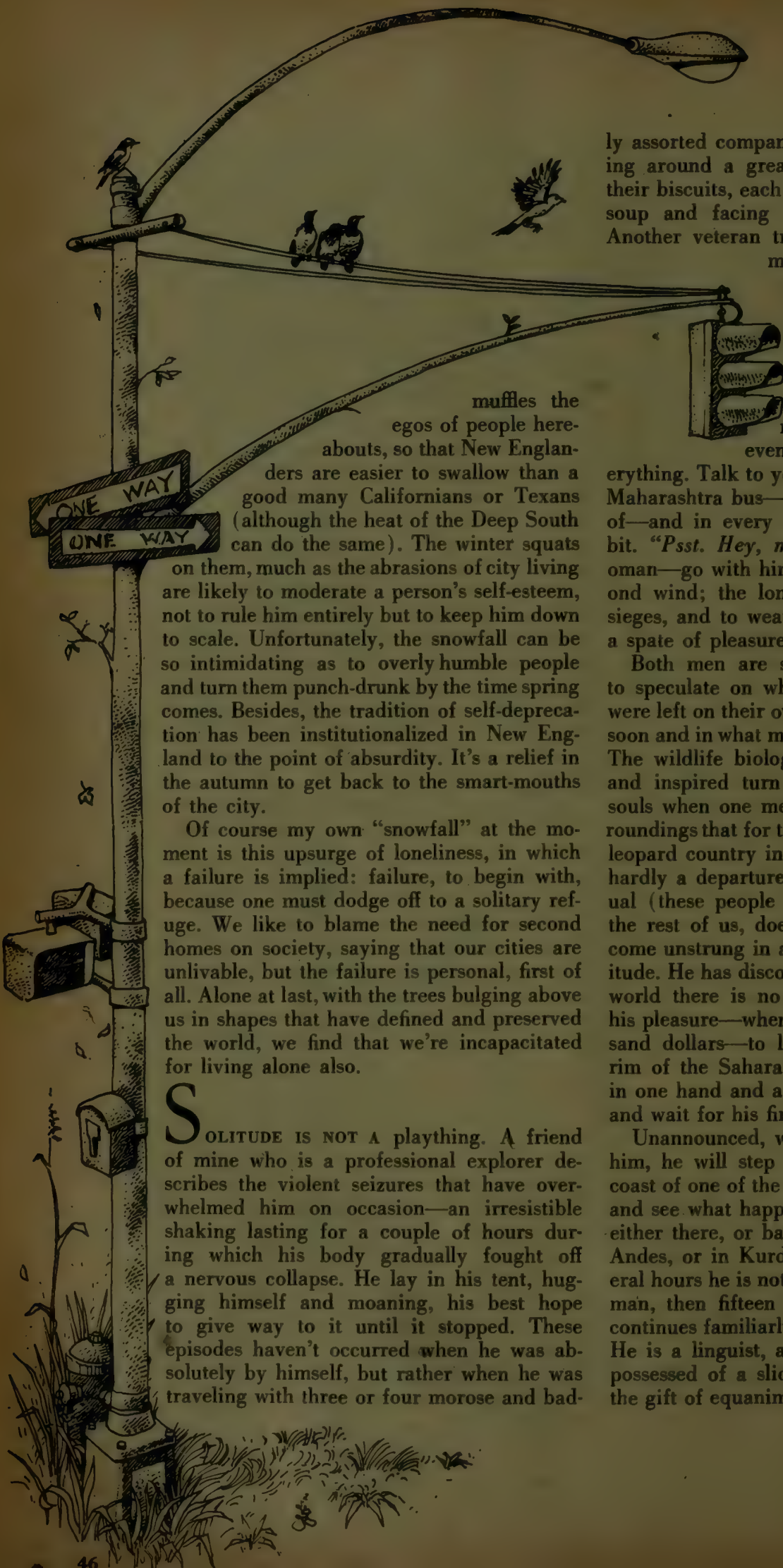
I'm surrounded by hatchlings—have scouted up the grouse that produces chicks each spring at the head of the upper field, to count how many she has: three black-brown feather-fluffs with needly beaks frozen as straight

as ships in the short grass to deceive me. Two ravens have a nest on the cliff, around where the sunrise hits, and the pair of hawks whose presence I have enjoyed for years are safely back, prudent in relation to a human figure on the ground. In incongruous mews and squeals they chat back and forth as they sail and soar. The hummingbirds, the bats, the man-prints of porcupines and coons—all as before, except that the bad winter appears to have cut into the population of bats, who hibernate in crevices on the cliffside. On the oak trees and striped maples flower tassels hang from the twigs; daffodils and shadbush blooms have given place to trillium, ground phlox, and cherry blossoms. I may miss seeing the ridge-slope fox, but last year glimpsed him with a tattered chipmunk drooping like a cigar from his mouth, tired and angling toward home, so I know where he lives. The white wolf-dog I've already caught sight of—watching me and watching his feet, he organized his escape plan as he fled—and my square house with its steep roof like a hat pulled low over the eyes: sometimes I would gladly drive for fifty hours to have these things.

The snow, which as a summer person I am content to miss, as not the least of its services,







ly assorted companions, all of them hunkering around a greasy fire, rubbing soot off their biscuits, each hoarding a cup of smoky soup and facing in a different direction. Another veteran traveler has described for

me the set of routines by which he wards off hysteria. Lunch is a production if possible, as a matter of habit; and then a nap; cocktails at five; note-taking during the morning; his diary in the evening—a fuss to record ev-



everything. Talk to your seatmate on the cross-Maharashtra bus—meals always made much of—and in every city never refuse a gambit. “*Psst. Hey, mister,*” whispers a dragoman—go with him! He finds he gets a second wind; the loneliness strikes in several sieges, and to weather one means a respite, a spate of pleasures, before the next.

Both men are still fascinated, as I am, to speculate on what would happen if they were left on their own for many months. How soon and in what manner would they go mad? The wildlife biologists who are most acute and inspired turn out to be such isolated souls when one meets them in civilized surroundings that for them the seclusion of snow-leopard country in the Karakoram Range is hardly a departure. I know another individual (these people interest me) who, unlike the rest of us, doesn’t worry that he might come unstrung in a situation of ultimate solitude. He has discovered that in the practical world there is no such circumstance. It is his pleasure—when he has saved a few thousand dollars—to land himself at the north rim of the Sahara with a strapped suitcase in one hand and a windbreaker in the other and wait for his first ride.

Unannounced, with no expedition behind him, he will step from a pirogue onto the coast of one of the outer islands of Indonesia and see what happens. What does happen—either there, or back behind the wall of the Andes, or in Kurdistan—is that within several hours he is not alone; he is with a tribesman, then fifteen tribesmen, and the story continues familiarly. He has special qualities. He is a linguist, a sexual switch-hitter, and possessed of a sliding, enigmatic smile and the gift of equanimity in equal measure with

muffles the egos of people hereabouts, so that New Englanders are easier to swallow than a good many Californians or Texans (although the heat of the Deep South can do the same). The winter squats

on them, much as the abrasions of city living are likely to moderate a person’s self-esteem, not to rule him entirely but to keep him down to scale. Unfortunately, the snowfall can be so intimidating as to overly humble people and turn them punch-drunk by the time spring comes. Besides, the tradition of self-deprecation has been institutionalized in New England to the point of absurdity. It’s a relief in the autumn to get back to the smart-mouths of the city.

Of course my own “snowfall” at the moment is this upsurge of loneliness, in which a failure is implied: failure, to begin with, because one must dodge off to a solitary refuge. We like to blame the need for second homes on society, saying that our cities are unlivable, but the failure is personal, first of all. Alone at last, with the trees bulging above us in shapes that have defined and preserved the world, we find that we’re incapacitated for living alone also.

**S**OLITUDE IS NOT A plaything. A friend of mine who is a professional explorer describes the violent seizures that have overwhelmed him on occasion—an irresistible shaking lasting for a couple of hours during which his body gradually fought off a nervous collapse. He lay in his tent, hugging himself and moaning, his best hope to give way to it until it stopped. These episodes haven’t occurred when he was absolutely by himself, but rather when he was traveling with three or four morose and bad-



his fearlessness, and like the other two is an Olympic athlete at feats of solitude compared to you and me.

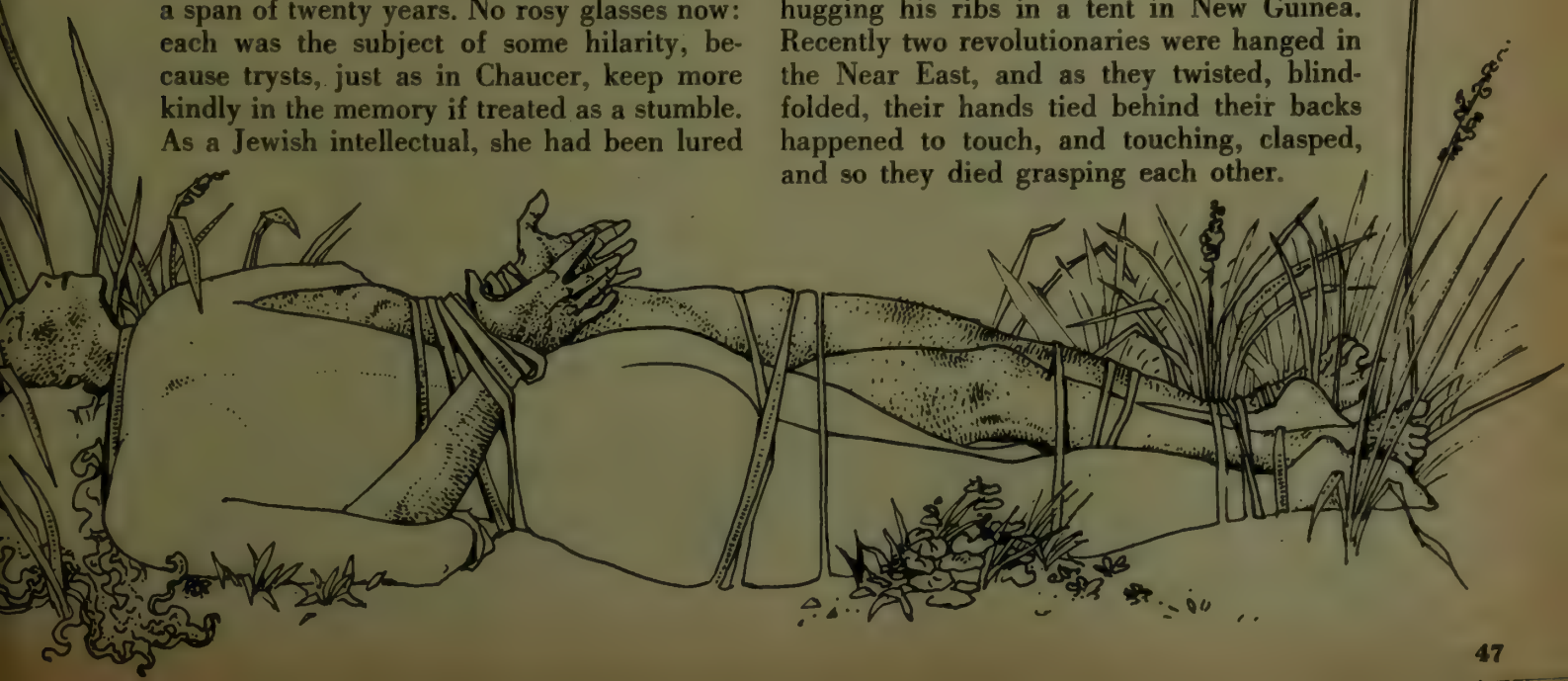
In Atrica I've had my handwriting disintegrate at a border crossing from a case of bad nerves, so that I couldn't cash a traveler's check and was almost barred entry on grounds of illegibility. Even in these modest woods loneliness muffles me like snow, and my sad penis at night, like a club in my hand—as futile as a club, and a Stone-Age implement for all of us, which is why we love it so—reminds me of many failings stretching far afield from sex. It is our saving grace that despite every social and scientific innovation and all our cumulative monkeying, if a man lays hands on a woman of his choosing and doesn't feel his penis swell with blood, his life can still be altered catastrophically. Though such is not my trouble, it's out here, holding this stubborn, thick appendage—never more impotent than when hard—that the relativism of the city appears in its full foolishness: the idea that anything goes.

The perception that our individual anguish is part of a tide of anguish and our exuberance part of a wave of joy is a religious one. We are all fragile—the health-food faddist down the road, throwing up his health foods now and submitting to anaesthetic injections in the last stages of cancer; the counterculture young folk in town knotting their brows at meetings of the Low Income Association, figuring how they too can become a clubhouse pressure group.

I went through a siege of cancer with a friend, and one of the spectacles that took shape in her mind as she waited between operations was an inspection of the raggle-taggle file of admirers with whom she'd shared a span of twenty years. No rosy glasses now: each was the subject of some hilarity, because trysts, just as in Chaucer, keep more kindly in the memory if treated as a stumble. As a Jewish intellectual, she had been lured

by ethnic opposites or seamen, movers, actors, not seeking a mirror of herself but what she didn't already have, so that an obvious unconformity recurred. They weren't unlike a row of knotty "problems" as she ranged them up, trying to draw some conclusions. She could claim that she had left each of them a little better off than when she'd met him—his career clarified, perhaps, if he had one, his nervous system temporarily rehabilitated. To her surprise, the lover with the longest tenure had dwindled almost to a cipher in her recollection. Her favorite was a motorcycling German who had joked with her and put her in the hospital and whom she hadn't taken seriously. At supper parties with his pals, she'd used to reach up her left sleeve and with a flourish remove her bra—but now girls had stopped wearing bras. Her former husband she had married on the rebound from another man, a man whom she herself had turned away, she realized, although he'd loved her endlessly and though indeed she may have loved him more than her husband. For having seemed to love her too much, at last he'd had to marry somebody else. She remembered being told as a little girl by her aunt—the beauty in the family, whom she was thought to take after—to marry someone who loved her not only more than all the world but more than she loved him; and so she'd done the opposite.

Once I read about a medieval death imposed by a potentate on two lovers. He had their arms tied around each other and left them lying face to face to starve. Supposedly the horror of it was that they would grow to loathe one another, sweating in this mockery of the coital position, but I don't see it so; I remember my explorer friend shivering, hugging his ribs in a tent in New Guinea. Recently two revolutionaries were hanged in the Near East, and as they twisted, blindfolded, their hands tied behind their backs happened to touch, and touching, clasped, and so they died grasping each other.





EVERYTHING IS SO fragilely a matter of interpretation that we tread on the edge of mayhem or suicide if a tilt occurs in our minds. Sex and laughter were the original belly-pokers, and with inhibition came civilization, but there is such significance to loneliness that we continue to suffer from it, that we can't exist complacently, puttering about, watching TV, and sleeping, but instead are pulled together with an urgency, as if, apart, we had no skins. When it sets in, it springs up although well placated only the day before: an awful ache, and what it partly is—as the anthropologists would agree—is the call of the wild, as one looks down at one's funny legs, which in their quirky shape have more to do with trotting across a grassy valley in company with a hunting party than accelerating a car. In the city, I live overlooking an elevated highway and can hear around the clock a rush of traffic, most of which cannot be going anywhere terribly exciting, but pressing, pressing just the same. Once when the highway was out of commission it rapidly became populated with joggers, who also traveled up and down.

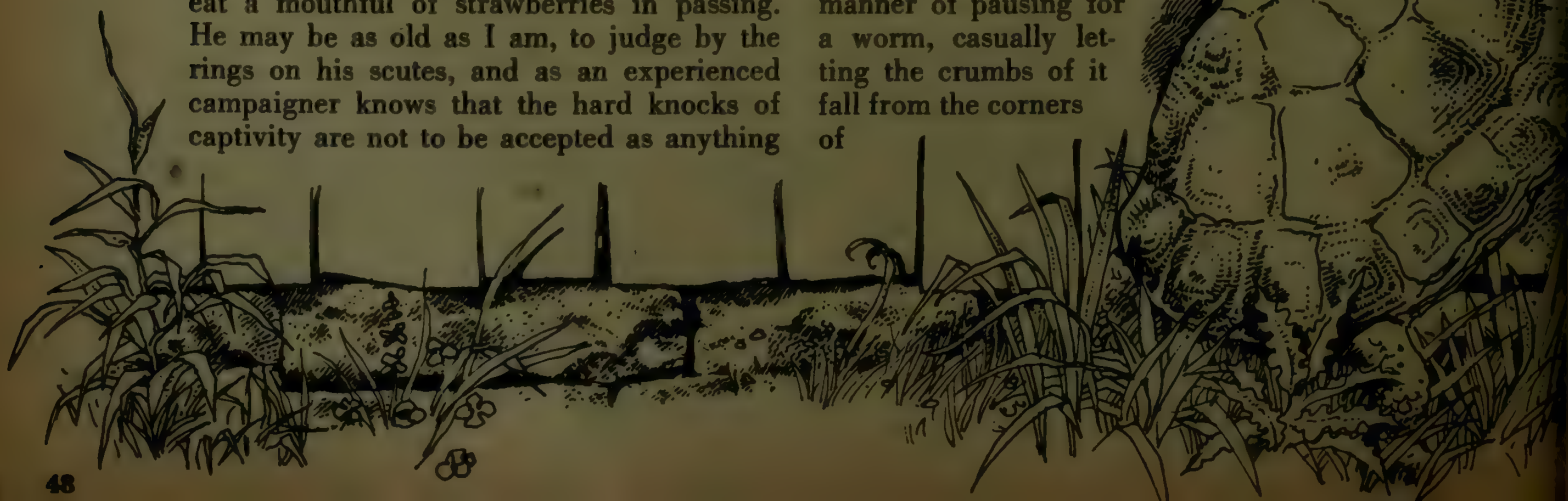
I don't stay still either, and give people that traveler's "Bye-bye" when I leave, though afterwards when I am under way I worry that I'm smashing up my life by my avoidances and indecisions. A friend who is seventy-nine, the only person hereabouts interested enough in scouting in the woods to pinpoint a den of coyotes that everyone was speculating about, whisks his hand lightly over his bald head to betoken the speeding years—says they go by for him like slices falling from a loaf of bread. He was born in his own bedroom, but, never having left Vermont, he's brought the world to him. That is, he regularly sees in his woodlot "tigers," "moose," "mountain lions."

I keep a turtle for the same reason. He hasn't surrendered to being a pet, and pauses in his escape attempts only long enough to eat a mouthful of strawberries in passing. He may be as old as I am, to judge by the rings on his scutes, and as an experienced campaigner knows that the hard knocks of captivity are not to be accepted as anything

but temporary. I keep him in the rabbits' pen to confirm that, as in the fable, he covers much more ground than them. To look at him, it wouldn't seem he could; and just as unexpectedly, his dogged efforts to escape—banging down on his back from halfway up the tence—are gradually accomplishing exactly what he seeks. I'm moved by his persistence and will soon release him. He looks like a brown chock of wood, and has a thumb-shaped head and mail-like, horny plates of armor on the front of his wide legs to shield them when he draws inside his shell. But when he opens himself again—stretching out his legs and head—behind the head and sleeves of mail protecting his legs are a tender pair of shoulders, puffy with the fat that he has put on between escape attempts. Both these and certain dashings on the previously hidden portions of his legs are a passionate orange.

He lives under a roof of brown bone, on a hard bedboard, carrying his bed about with him, using it as a fifth leg in many of his maneuvers, as when he slides down off a log. He sleeps with his hind legs lolled out personably and his head poignantly at rest. His fire-colored shoulders must identify him to other turtles of the species, and it was probably his search for a mate that brought him out to the dirt road where I caught him. Otherwise he is remarkably footloose, has no social life to speak of (the rabbits are more interested in making friends with him), and seems almost as free from a knowledge of the pangs of hunger as of loneliness. He needs to be plump enough to survive hibernation, but not so fat that his limbs can't pull wholly into his shell if a raccoon should happen to grab him and begin to scratch and gnaw.

Because turtles are willing to starve in captivity, their usual form of surrender is only to agree to eat, but his manner of pausing for a worm, casually letting the crumbs of it fall from the corners of





his mouth as he continues to search for a hole in the fence, makes him more of a figure than merely fatalistic resistance by starvation would. Certainly his singular shell must have saved his life when he has been caught by human beings—as well as coons—before, because for every dozen people who will immediately stomp on a snake, only one will want to kill a turtle.

He pumps his throat as he breathes in an exercise reminiscent of cud-chewing, and expresses contentment by this, as dogs by the sounds of their breathing express affection to each other and to us. Even on his back after a fall, he rests, not panicked, because his mastery of the uses of his shell is like a hockey player's with a stick. He sometimes talks to himself with the thump of it, I think—employing or not employing the sound, choosing or not choosing to thump—and, like the elegant fire-flickerings of his shoulders and legs, it is a more eloquent statement than his official hiss.

**A** FRIDAY, LATER.

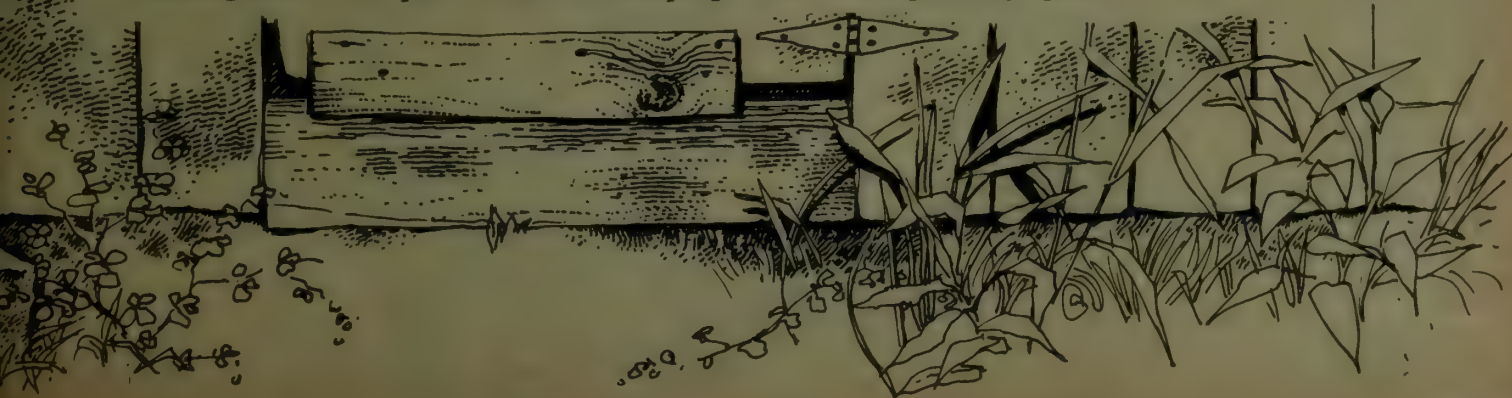
I have a friend or two whose only response to adversity is this same harshness of the woods to cauterize a failure or a wound. They buckle themselves into it like putting on ice packs. No doubt like me they go into the woods to celebrate also—the astounded feeling that you get from looking at a tadpole balancing in the water with his large tail, but sprouting four dark legs. Even a farmer hacking a path through a side of beef to stock his freezer is dismantling a structure of wonder and grace.

I cook rhubarb, nibble wood sorrel, and steep the house with the smell of wild-meat roasts. Outward self-sufficiency, and yet I keep the radio on—women's voices from Canada playing Schumann and speaking French. Whatever they are saying sounds loving to me.

In the past, when I have felt a divorce action drawing near, I've put a tent and sleeping

bag in my car; a friend of mine sets his canoe on his truck—gestures about as germane as an Edwardian reserving a room at his club. But, sleeping bag and all, I am so lonely now that it is like a hemorrhage. Listening to the clicking noise of my dog licking his paws, feeding the stove past midnight till my hands sink and the knuckles get burned, I groan beastly groans or burst into loud phrases that might seem disconnected if they weren't embarrassingly transparent, with my belowstairs mind standing right in back of my tongue. A girl who lives as a squatter in a hut over the hill, when she gets into company where the talk is too much for her, makes a zipping motion across her temple to show that she has lost her way again. Chop-chop-chop she goes with her hips, in bed with the axemen who in payment will chop her winter's wood.

In midwinter the game warden, touring on his snowmobile, generally discovers somebody from the city still holed up in a cabin around here piled high with snow, a cashiered engineer from Boston, who used to work in aerospace but has denned up like a bear sucking on its toes and claws. The first woods travelers in America—men like Peter Kalm, William Bartram, and Crèvecoeur—appear from their journals to have been a peaceable lot who in exploring the God-given world didn't find it necessary to become entangled overmuch with aborigines, as would have been the case on one of the hotter continents. Mostly they met other whites—energetic, appreciative souls, on the whole, who shared their gaiety. Now we are likely to lie low with our energies instead of walk, and do it in order to take stock, which is what we busy ourselves with a good deal anyway. Although the country hideaway, set in a kind of tuning-fork relationship of tension to the city, where the owner's money or reputation is actually made, is a new *modus operandi*, it is impossible to calculate the end of the effects of the closing off of all that old, free operating space.





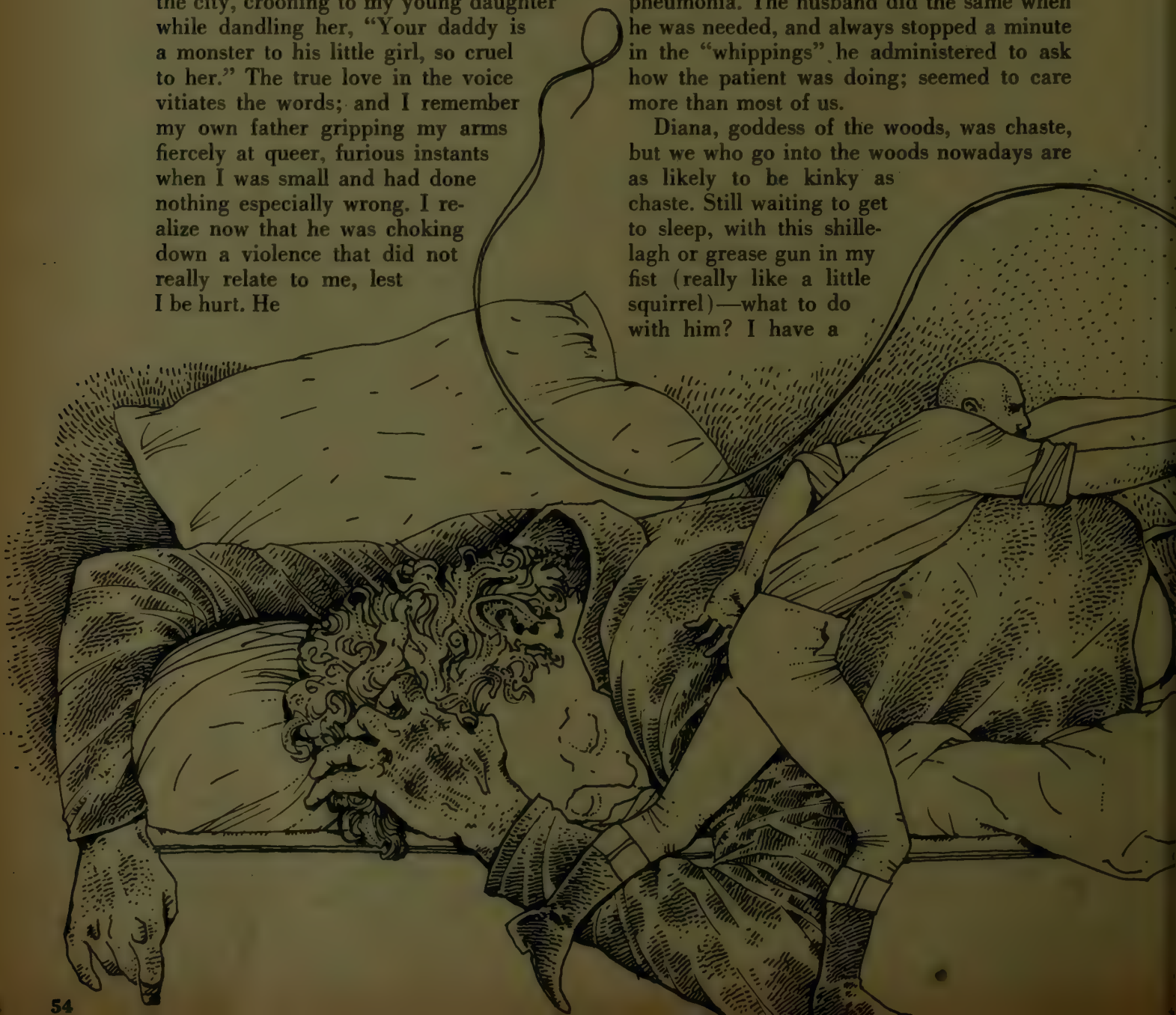
At performances of the sideshow in a circus that I used to work for as a boy, I'd watch the knife-thrower, after he had thrown at his wife (who was also the circus nurse), go into the second segment of his act, which was—to put it bluntly—to whip a series of women. He didn't need to ask for volunteers; he was besieged by them. In slacks and pleated blouses, cashmere sweaters and pedal pushers, they wanted the sensation of a horse-whip wrapping roughly around them, laid on by a black-haired, muscular man—the whole experience of a sexual lashing except (because of his skill) the pain. For him, too, both as a knife-thrower who avoided murdering anybody and in the whipping performance, to go through the motions was sufficient.

There is a monster in me which I keep at bay by such reflexes as, for example, in the city, crooning to my young daughter while dandling her, "Your daddy is a monster to his little girl, so cruel to her." The true love in the voice vitiates the words; and I remember my own father gripping my arms fiercely at queer, furious instants when I was small and had done nothing especially wrong. I realize now that he was choking down a violence that did not really relate to me, lest I be hurt. He

read sadistic popular fiction on occasion and must have been astonished by these impulses, as we all are, an astonishment which, at the layman's level, the science of psychology has not diminished. "Why are you watching this woman being whipped?" an inquiring reporter might have asked us at the sideshow; and as long as his expression was serious and he approached us one by one, not trying to challenge us as a mob, we would have been utterly abashed, at a loss to explain even in our private minds.

It's just as well, unless one believes in the perfectibility of man. Besides, there is the complication that the wife of the woman-whipper climbed off the platform, after he had thrown his knives at her, and, in a perfectly unruffled, competent manner, she went behind the hippo's tank to attend to a cage-hand who was lying in a pile of straw with pneumonia. The husband did the same when he was needed, and always stopped a minute in the "whippings" he administered to ask how the patient was doing; seemed to care more than most of us.

Diana, goddess of the woods, was chaste, but we who go into the woods nowadays are as likely to be kinky as chaste. Still waiting to get to sleep, with this shillelagh or grease gun in my fist (really like a little squirrel)—what to do with him? I have a





fantasy that at least has the virtue of logic. I am an itinerant slave-dealer, and toward the end of the day, I have the women walk in front of my horse with their skirts pinned up so I can watch their buttocks swing and pick a partner for the evening. Other fantasies, however, have me harnessed to a cart, instead of playing the master; or where I wear a nose ring and am in bed attached to a woman's necklace, like a kind of living bauble. And however astutely you explain masochism, it is not logical.

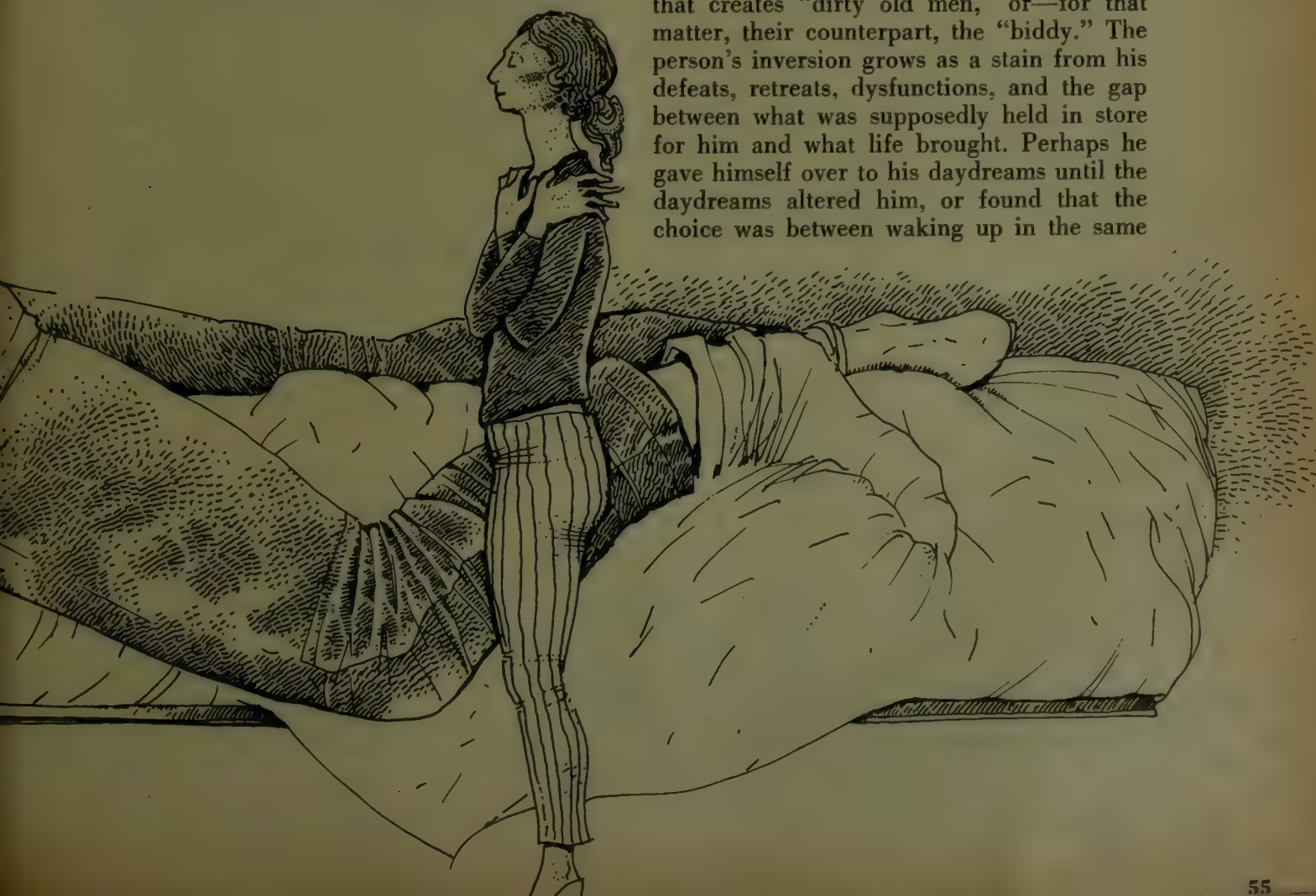
Women after Diana have usually left men to their own devices in the woods, as perhaps we have wished. Nevertheless, we do people it; and the recent fantasies I've had depict me lying on my side on the bed with my hands tied behind my back and fastened to a ring around the base of my scrotum. Helpless but not in discomfort, I move about at times and am in use as a sort of dildo by an amused woman, closer to forty than thirty (I am identified as being "young"), who feeds me from her mouth or with her hands, first fastening me between her legs with my throat pressing against her so that she can feel me swallow. She releases me to exercise but keeps the intimacy tight between us, ra-

tioning my sexual activity.

I'm not unique in this variety of vision. The prostitutes are telling the sociologists that they are being inundated at the moment by men seeking extreme humiliation. Is it death the customers are really after? The woman of my fantasy—self-besotted, like the mannequin who stands in for me—does not resemble the women who in fact inhabit my memories. I do still yearn to be initiated, however, and try to manufacture opportunities for that in lovemaking. I'm boyish, as if only through boyishness can I slip through the woman's resistance to win her indulgence.

There are two ways for a man to be boyish, both corresponding to a woman's "flirtation." One of them simply reclaims the years of first courtship, salting those blundering forms of appeal with irony and directness—the haste of people who recognize that they are mortal—and strikes the rest of us as pleasing because the person seems to occupy all of his life at once. But the other boyishness is compulsive, like a child's dizziness in the environs of mum. In his abject imaginings, the prostitute's client gropes backward, I suspect, and not forward towards death.

It is marriage as often as bachelorhood that creates "dirty old men," or—for that matter, their counterpart, the "biddy." The person's inversion grows as a stain from his defeats, retreats, dysfunctions, and the gap between what was supposedly held in store for him and what life brought. Perhaps he gave himself over to his daydreams until the daydreams altered him, or found that the choice was between waking up in the same





house with his children in the morning but living with a woman who would not sleep with him, or leaving them forlornly to go and live with somebody who would.

I used to ask the first girl I ever made love to to spread her legs as widely as she could and raise them high, as if to dramatize that the shut legs I had met with before had opened at last. But I have another memory, startling because it came back unannounced after a hiatus of many years. It's of my first wife, before our marriage, sleeping on the floor beside my bed—her bed, actually, narrow, in a narrow apartment, and the pretext was that there was just space for one. Such memories, a dozen or twenty of them, cast a greenish, unnerving light over one's past. I didn't need to drive so far, eat wild meat, live with a bat-faced dog, and burn kerosene in order to bump up against them, but here they stand in relief.

Only in a roundabout way are weeks spent in the wilderness "purifying," and then only when the affair is brought to a conclusion before the person is disabled. As in the old medical practice of leeching, the stamina has been bled out of me. I came here brim-up with city sarcasms and the woods soon overpowered these alkalis. If I stay on, as I've learned from experience, the woods continue melting the edginess out of me, to a point of faith and glee and exultancy in the sailing foliage, the cut of the sunshine and rain—right on past this point of equilibrium, to runny butter on the ground. Arriving, I've had in me both the tigers that treed Black Sambo in the fairy tale and Black Sambo himself. The tigers run around and around these trees, to which, terrified, I cling, until they (the tigers) gradually melt, and, chastened—meek as Sambo was—I climb down, and, tiptoeing through a puddle that was a tiger once, steal away to the city again.

I get a glimpse, in other words, of what must have happened a good many times on the frontier. That pioneer in his uneasy solitude, with his vial of vanilla extract and endless spring

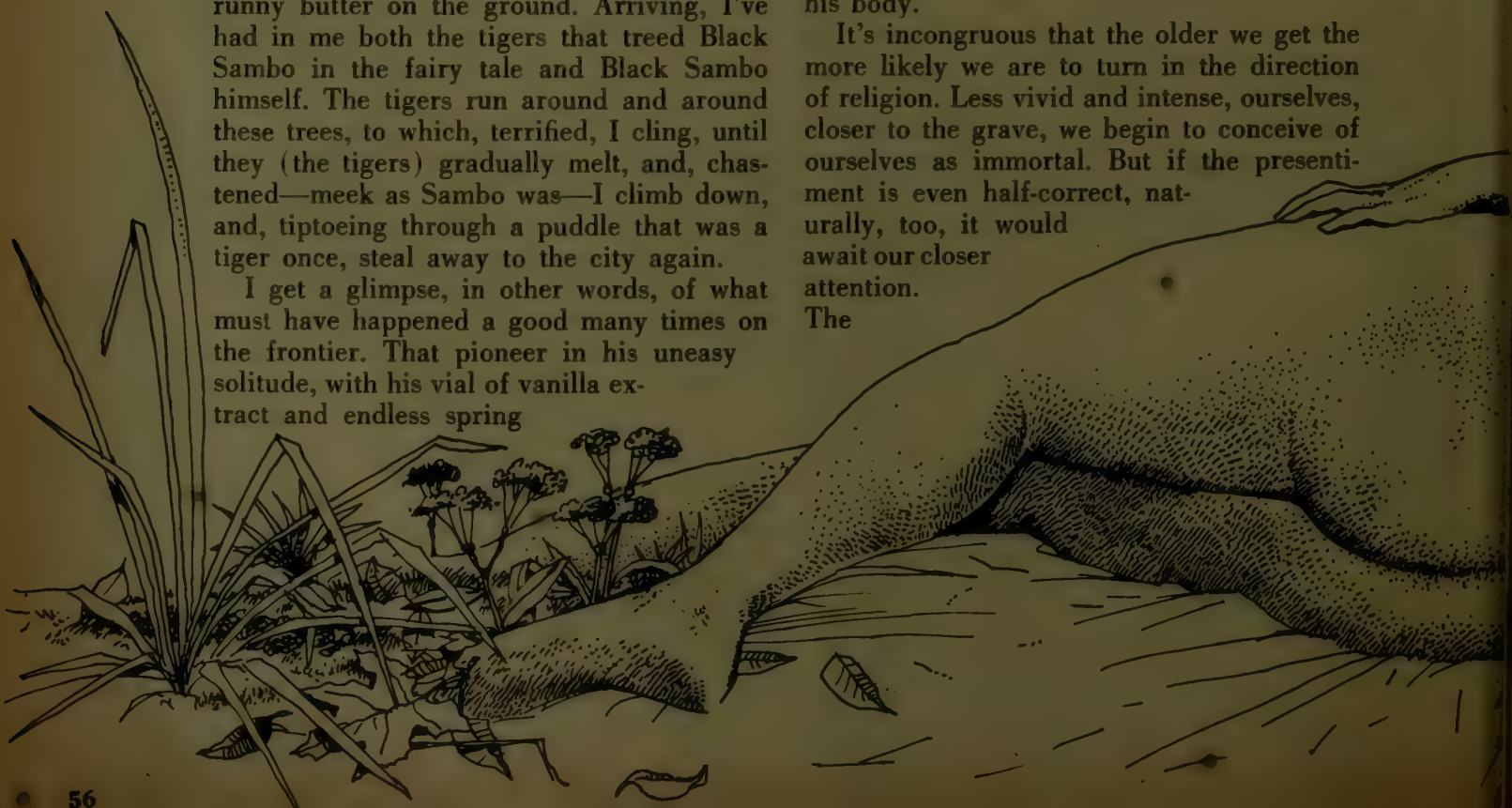
water, for periods of an hour or two every few days began to imagine he had a brass ring around his testicles that his hands were fastened to. He was seven miles from a neighbor, two days' walk from town, and by stages these spells extended to several hours, almost daily, the daydream evolving into a hallucination he could no longer control. Though in his own mind he wasn't alone at all, month by month it reached such a pass that he could hardly snatch time to hoe his potatoes or hunt for meat. Eventually, walking around with his hands clasped behind his back, he stopped splitting wood. The fire went out, and, one freezing night, lying with his hands that way, he died.

**T**HIS IS MY ONE LIFE and what is kinky in me worries me less than the dead spots. Kinkiness, like a reversible coat, can be turned inside out. A vulnerability, innocent as well as in despair, is represented, which, even if the opposite side is no more appetizing, makes for some leeway.

I have a clipping from Dien Bien Phu that shows a French major standing on a little rise with his arm raised to his men, more in salutation than command. He is leaf-thin, sleepless, soon to die. His hands sag exhaustedly. Like a leaf, he is beginning to curl at the ends, though his smile and long arms still carry the greeting, which is larger than his body.

It's incongruous that the older we get the more likely we are to turn in the direction of religion. Less vivid and intense, ourselves, closer to the grave, we begin to conceive of ourselves as immortal. But if the presentiment is even half-correct, naturally, too, it would await our closer attention.

The





sweetness of ordinary people's voices singing together can be taken as evidence, for instance: the absolutely unearthly beauty they acquire in combining with each other, which has no relation to the honking quality each is cursed with alone. In an era of canned entertainment, we hear 100 voices singing together now mostly in church, but whatever the setting, if the whole is so much greater than the parts, we might deduce the existence of God.

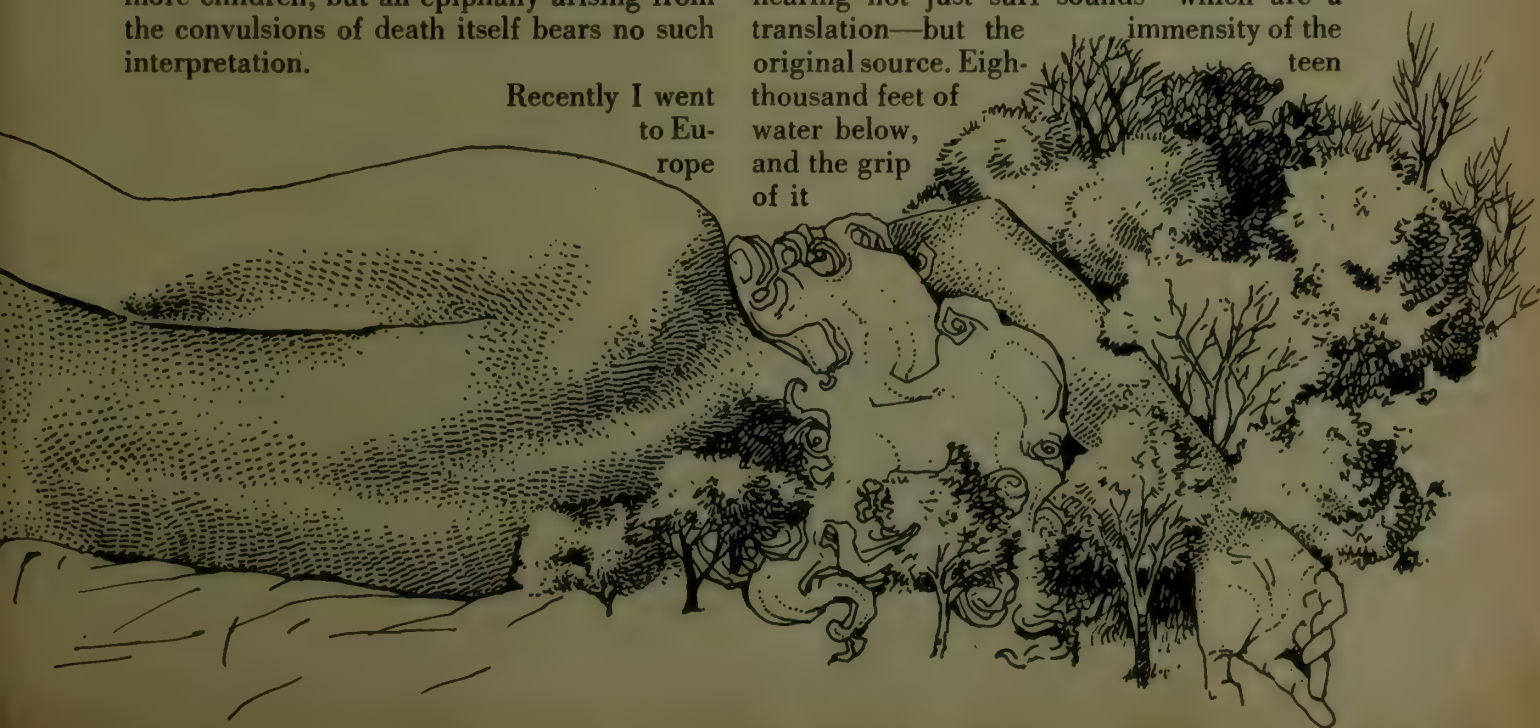
"Once I realized I couldn't rescue myself, an indescribable feeling of calmness and serenity came over me," a man who nearly drowned told two researchers from the University of Iowa. Interviewing more than 100 survivors of near-death situations, they discovered that a slowing of external time "and a vast recall of happy events were generally linked and clearly related." Many people "described their emotional state as pleasurable, and twenty-three percent even acknowledged joy."

The very root of my own hopefulness is a long stint I spent working in an army morgue—the odd smiles of most of the dead as death had overtaken them and the nature of death dawned on them. Or maybe, on the contrary, the revelation was not really so much of death as of the nature of life, as an extravaganza of glad scenes sped past their eyes. Either way, a simple explanation referring to the vicissitudes of evolution would not do justice to the sense of peace their expressions implied. We can argue that the reason women tend to forget the pain of childbirth is so that they will consent to have more children, but an epiphany arising from the convulsions of death itself bears no such interpretation.

Recently I went  
to Europe

for the first time in ten years, sailing at night; and for me, on board, the event was rife with premonitions of living forever, although of course death is also pictured as being some sort of shipping out. Many people get these feelings—smiling at their enemies as at their friends, all of us to meet some day in a theater removed. I was ten years older, noticeably frailer on deck in the wind, and yet the sensation was as sharp as a yelp, compounded partly of my happiness and the ship's floodlit angles and New York City's big straight stripe of lights, which were yellow and hospitable-looking, stippled softly across a thousand buildings—as if this were not for me one of altogether perhaps a last handful of trips across the Atlantic, but one of an infinite number of sailings.

Manhattan makes a handsome showing from the water, with its streets orange slashes and the parcels of dark warehousing adding bulk and contrast to the lighted skyscrapers and apartment complexes, until the Battery and World Trade Center finish the narrative with a concentrated statement of what power is. Then the green, puff-chested Statue of Liberty, crusted with fame, and the green-lighted East River bridges, as you look back. I was on the *Queen Elizabeth 2* for the fun of the voyage, the memories of earlier sailings, and the notion that crossing between continents ought to be a momentous undertaking. I wanted to feel the earth move under me and to rattle across a rough roadbed, because lying in one's stateroom in a light sea is rather like a railroad journey. I wanted to know for five days that I was afloat on the ocean, hearing not just surf sounds—which are a translation—but the immensity of the original source. Eighteen thousand feet of water below, and the grip of it





insisting that one is not going to put one's foot down just any old where, but *there*, and now over *there*, and now over *there*. "Crossing the pond," the sailors say, with their faces belying the words.

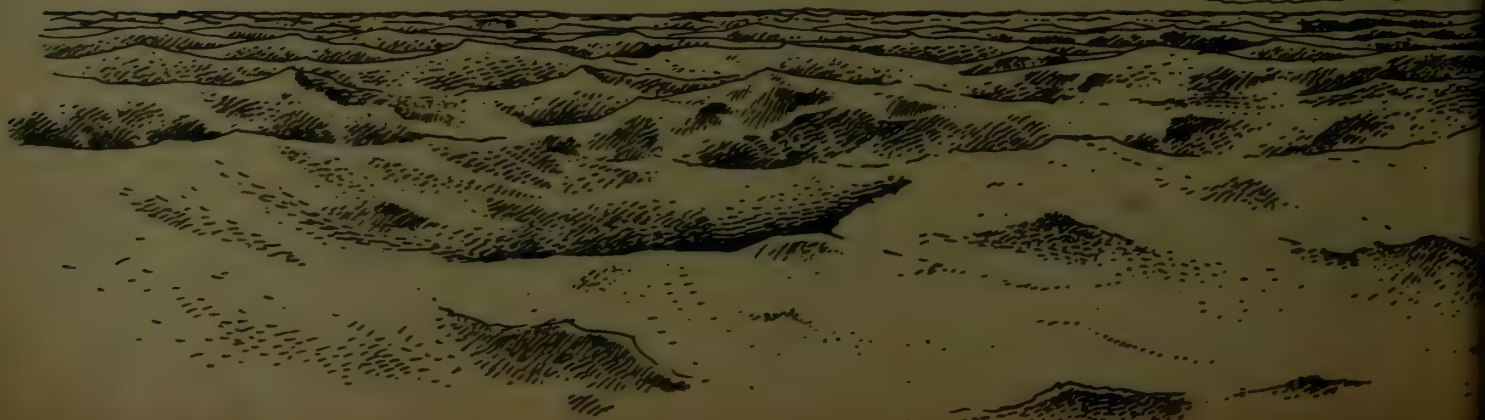
And so, shivers of anticipation as we got under way, although, still the New Boy in middle age, I bumped twice to the dining room with my briefcase bumping against my knee, being sized up humorously by the British waiters, before ascertaining that I needn't forfeit my dinner to watch the sailing. There were English round-trippers ("Oh, have you just come aboard?"), and English who had flown to America only the day before. Also a young fan of British shipping from Tooting who had gone to visit the *Queen Mary* in her concrete slip in Long Beach, California, having paid for the jaunt by running a roller coaster in Santa Cruz; and a couple of nurses who had been slaving away in Fort Worth, imported with 300 of their countrywomen to do a year of night duty. So many English don't like living in England, one meets them all over—English girls going out to Australia or veering around again.

In the rush on the pier I had kissed my daughter goodbye but had forgotten to kiss my wife and had tried to shout to her afterwards from the deck of the ship that I was sorry. Though like most men I have polygamous impulses, I don't generally try to "renew" myself by chasing after another generation of women—it is old friends I hanker after—and so after I had made a pass at one of the English nurses I settled quite contentedly into the deckchair society of other sedentary individuals. Even so, traveling is bound to be a polygamous experience, as one's memory works. My first wife and I had made a crossing, and she was here and would be again, I realized, in Bracciano Castle, the Pitti Palace, and half-a-dozen other places. Both wives, with their poignant, slim necks—high collars—strolled the deck.

My father, too, was on the ship, because

he'd always sailed off to an assignment in Europe on one of the Cunard Queens if he could. An exceedingly innocent man for a lawyer, he, like me, had been a little scared upon departure—you could see it in his back as he went up the gangplank—and sometimes did meet with adventures, such as returning to his hotel room in West Berlin to find four fishy fellows going through his luggage. His travels, like mine, were mostly alone, because my mother's romantic fancies led her elsewhere, but he was trusted at sight by most acquaintances, and I could envision him right now beginning the process of striking up new ones. Abroad, he was bad at learning the language of the country—the words just couldn't seem to jack themselves together in his mouth—but on his feet had a fast sense of direction. He was reasonably tolerant of foreign customs, considering his intolerance of ethnic variations at home; but feared the germs on foreign money and disliked handling foreign currency; liked to "crack" bills anyway in a mannerism I found irritating. He had bowel troubles which he regarded so solemnly that the rest of the family took his alarums as a joke. (Once he flew clear home from Switzerland because of a case of constipation.) Then, however, he contracted bowel cancer, mourning his feet as they swelled up and died before his eyes, mourning his legs likewise.

I am evasive with people who are gravely ill, and what I most regret with respect to my father is not so much that secret hunchback residing in me who exulted to learn that he was dying—because the psychological phenomenon of sons set irremediably against their fathers is not something we are responsible for—but, instead, the genuinely grieving side that did wish urgently to help but miscalculated what to do. Sometimes when he sought sympathy, instead of mourning right along with him, I tried to "cheer him up." I remember him looking down at his legs, which were





moribund and withering, but myself saying to him, "Oh, but you still have your brain!"

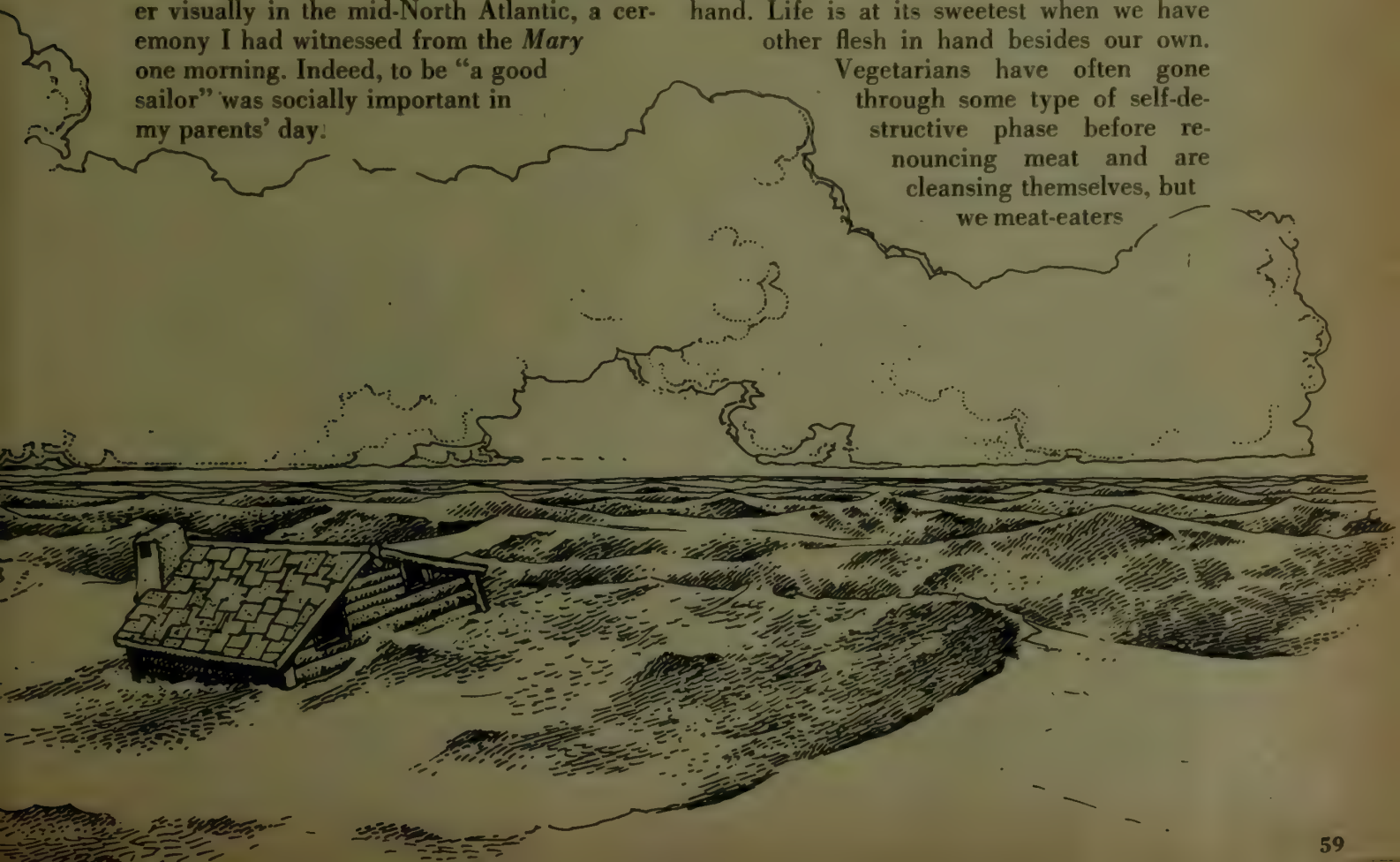
Swaddled like a sanatorium patient in the deck chair, drinking bouillon, chewing ships' biscuits, I couldn't fail to think of his last couple of ocean cruises; it seemed to be how he had wanted to go out of the world. Or maybe he'd felt convinced, like me in the excitement of the ship's sailing, that he would live forever if he was on the sea. Rattling along in a "ripple sea," with the broad band of white wake behind, an unvarnished stream of brown smoke above the ship in bright sunshine, and the vigorous longboats overhead as you paced the boat deck, it surely did appear as though, if God in the thrust of his vivacity were not benign, there must be multiple gods, because *one* of them was.

In a "moderate" sea, with thumps in it, knocking against three sides of the cabin, and the hull of the ship stretching and creaking, I had headaches and a weighty stomach, but this was part of what I'd come for. The steward kept four canaries, which he let fly in the corridor at night. He spoke of the ship as "goldier" than either the true-blue old *Q.E.1*—which had just burned in Singapore—or the *Queen Mary*. Both had had port-holes that opened, instead of air conditioning, so that a breeze blew through, and oak rather than plastic and alloy paneling. The two ships used to arrange to salute each other visually in the mid-North Atlantic, a ceremony I had witnessed from the *Mary* one morning. Indeed, to be "a good sailor" was socially important in my parents' day!

For entertainment in the Double Room, a silver-painted puppet danced from the strings of a taller puppet, clothed in red, which was worked by a green-suited puppeteer with wooden movements and a frigid grin—until he suddenly finished and bowed fluidly, a human being again. A few hours out of New York, I had woken with a nightmare from the whirling of Nantucket Light, but by the landfall off Cherbourg the city's ties had drained from my face, the ocean's surge had engendered in me the illusion of a whole family history with it. The sea is also a crocodile—in the agony of swallowing water overboard—but I was on the ship. I rocked ashore, myself.

**T**HERE ARE PLACES in Ethiopia so high and silent that the villagers can listen to the wings of migrating birds miles away. They are roofless in the world, as we are too, if we remembered it. Digging earthworms for my turtle, sometimes I get the idea that nothing is more fleshly than worms are. Nutritionally, they are a quintessence of protein, and as white as one's secret flesh under one's pants. They are the flesh that fishermen root out before they go to try to catch a fish—and flesh is everything. To slide one's hand inside a lover's clothes is to want to leave it there forever—the buttocks larger than the hand. Life is at its sweetest when we have other flesh in hand besides our own.

Vegetarians have often gone through some type of self-destructive phase before renouncing meat and are cleansing themselves, but we meat-eaters





eat to augment what we have, and, embracing, feast upon each other in order to amplify ourselves.

If human nature eventually is going to take the place of nature everywhere, those of us who have been naturalists will have to transpose the faith in nature which is inherent in the profession to a faith in man—if necessary, man alone in the world. It is not an impossible leap. I pick the sticks to cook my supper with, a ritual of intimacy with the fire and the wood, like my dog's delight in observing the chipmunks that he stalks. Like my handling a steak, there's nothing in his attentiveness toward what he hunts suggesting hate. I'm burning spruce floorboards torn up six years ago, just now. Floorboards, like new birch logs, are made of sunshine too.

Outside, orange Canada lilies are in bloom, blue cornflowers, purple blossoms on the vetch, baby green apples, and green raspberries. On and on through the succession of quiet towns, the road from New York City seemed ready to lead me clear north to the Arctic, if I kept driving, but I'm ready to retrace my steps a while. City humor is expansive, New England's understated; New England humor is ironic, and the city's more festive. I want to sit down with some horseplayers again.

Country people believe they live close to the bone, close to the permanences, which in the sense that nothing could be more evanescent than work accomplished in the country, they do. Their houses molder very promptly when un-lived-in. Their barns go broken-backed under the weight of the snow. Their fields quickly begin reverting to woods if left unmowed for more than three years in a row. Around here the most permanent work of inscription has been done by the bears on the beech trees.

Beeches possess a smooth, grayish bark, almost watercolored, which cuts as easily as the bark of paper birch, but doesn't peel as birchbark does. These were the trees that lovers carved their hearts and initials on, back in the days when lovers knew the properties of different trees. The beech's skin, as tender as it is, will keep its scars right into old age, which may mean fifty or 100 years or more, longer than the occupants of any house in this township will be remembered, even if the house continues to stand. In my junk woods of what the loggers call "wid-

owmaker" stubs careening overhead and "schoolmarm" trees crotched so that no logger has wanted them, the marks of my friend the sow's clumbs will outlive not only her own passions but mine.

The bears' favorite food in the early fall has been jewelweed, which is an orange-flowered, succulent herb that grows in clumpish profusion in wet soil until killed by the first hard frost. The same October frost will bring down heaps of small, triangular, thin-shelled beechnuts in spiny, little open burrs that the bears dote on. The pioneers used to spread blankets on the ground to catch the nuts, from which they made beech coffee; also a first-rate salad oil, and a cooking flavoring whose faint echo we taste in beechnut chewing gum. So far, beech is not a wood much in demand by the timber industry, and the bears, having the trees to themselves, and feeling impatient and proprietary, will climb sixty or eighty feet into the crown of the fall foliage to shake the limbs and hurry the harvest along. In doing so, they leave a ladder-like series of neat claw prints going up (going down, the bear will slide as if the tree were a firehouse pole), incised with a particular fingering that manages to create a personal image of the bear involved that, for anybody who visits here a half-century from now, will have outlasted the memory of Vermont's governor or Gerald Ford.

These ladders up the beech trees have a logic to them and are precious for that. The bears are manlike and their marks manlike, and so carry an authority and resonance because they reach way back and yet one can ride forward on the memory of them for a good while. □





# THE FINAL SEASON

Legacy for an athlete getting old

George Plimpton

**I** SUPPOSE THE average athlete begins to wonder when his career is going to end almost as soon as he starts it—knowing that it either can be shortened with devastating swiftness by an injury, or eventually reach the point at which the great skills begin to erode. As time goes on, and the broadcasters begin to refer to the athlete as “veteran” and the club begins to use high draft choices to acquire young collegians to replace him for his position, the player has to decide whether to cut it clean and retire at the moment—as Rocky Marciano, the heavyweight champion, did—or wait for some sad moment like Willie Mays stumbling around in the outfield reaches of Candlestick Park—when the evidence is clear not only to oneself but to one’s peers that the time is up.

Subba Smith, the great Baltimore defensive end, thought of the process as being symbolized by a small, monkeylike figure he called “Mr. Rigor Mortis,” who sometimes crawled up out of the grass and slowed him down getting to the ball carrier. Smith told me once, “And then one year he jumps on your back. Sometimes you can brush him off, but every year he gets heavier and grips harder. I’ve seen him riding the backs of others. He’s just around somewhere. Look yonder—he might be just behind the door. Maybe he’s behind that curtain over there.”

Two summers ago I was driving up to Green Bay, Wisconsin, with a football player who had much of this on his mind. His name was Larry Curry, a veteran center (that unhappy designation) who was on his way to the

Packers’ training camp where he was going to give football one more try. He had started there ten years before under Vince Lombardi, and now his career, which had been most illustrious with the Baltimore Colts, had come full circle to the club where it had begun.

On the way we spent one night in the Hotel Pfister in Milwaukee, where we happened to run into Don Drysdale, the cranelike ex-Dodger pitcher, who was working on the California Angels broadcasting team and had been in the booth at the ball park that afternoon for an Angel-Milwaukee game. Curry recognized him, and the three of us sat down in a corner of the hotel’s tap room.

They exchanged news. Curry talked about going back to Green Bay and he admitted that he worried about making it. He had a long curved scar, white and new, crossing his knee-cap from a fearsome injury suffered while he was with the Houston Oilers, and he had no idea how the leg was going to hold up. Maybe the decision would soon be made for him.

Drysdale grinned, and, with the avuncular attitude of someone who has already gone through it, said that in his case it had been a very easy decision to make—and a very quick one.

Curry winced slightly and said he wanted to hear about it.

Well, the fellow who made it easy for him, Drysdale began, was Roberto Clemente, the great Puerto Rican player for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Clemente always gave him fits at the plate. The distinguishing characteristic of Clemente’s base hits was their ropelike trajec-

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tory, the ball hit at buzzing speeds, and every time he came up to bat against him, Clemente seemed to hit the ball straight up the middle. Drysdale said he never could face him without thinking of the terrible thing that had happened to Herb Score, the Indians' pitcher, when Gil McDougald hit the ball back into his face and almost blinded him. He'd stand on the mound and look down at Clemente and the Score thing would pop into his mind and he'd give an involuntary shudder. It got so bad, Drysdale told us, that when he delivered the ball, he flinched at his follow-through and tucked his head down a bit.

One day Clemente came up against him in a Dodger-Pirate game in Pittsburgh and drilled one. It was a line drive base hit into center field. Drysdale could hear the ball hum by his ear. Then he had the sensation of a bug crawling on his neck. He flicked at it. Leaning down for the rosin bag, he noticed a runny substance on his finger, and, still feeling the irritation, he reached up and discovered his ear was bleeding: the ball had actually taken the skin off the top of his ear on its way out to center field.

"That was enough for me," Drysdale said. "I remember the first game I pitched in the major leagues, and the last one, and I'm telling you I remember the last one better."

CURRY AND I LEFT the hotel early the next morning, planning to arrive in Green Bay before noon. Bill seemed preoccupied and kept referring back to Drysdale's story of the evening before. I asked him if moments like that were likely to come along in football—excluding a sudden wicked injury—a moment, like Drysdale's nicked ear, when a player knew he was finished.

"I'm not sure you can tell so easily," Bill said. "But you can tell. The difference is perhaps a half a step in speed. Just several weeks of not quite getting there would tell you. I won't know until I get in a couple of exhibition games."

We drove along in silence for a while—the countryside, green and beginning to shimmer in the July heat, slipping by.

"Curious," Curry said. "I can never think





the Pfister Hotel back there in Milwaukee without remembering Ray Nitschke—who was just the best middle linebacker there ever was at the end of his career.”

“He was a friend of yours?” I asked innocently.

“Friend?” Curry’s hand came off the wheel and made a fist. I thought he was going to smash it down on the horn.

“What was wrong with him?” I asked.

“He was just about the embodiment of my despair at Green Bay,” Curry said. “The guy is driven by an intensity which was simply monic. I don’t know another way of describing it. I remember Dan Pastorini, when he was with the Oilers, telling me about Nitschke’s intensity even during the *coin toss* at the beginning of an Oiler-Packer game. The captains were all standing out there at the fifty-yard line. Nitschke was out there jawing the referee who was going to flip the coin: ‘Right, goddammit! Come on, ref, toss the goddam coin! Let’s get it over with! I want to get the hell out of here! Let’s get this game going!’ He really frightened Pastorini.

“When I first signed with Green Bay, in

1964, I was in awe of Nitschke. Off the field he looked professorial: glasses, a high, balding dome. In uniform he looked massive and powerful and mean. The awe soon became tempered by a sort of hatred. At practices he’d appear on the field padded to the hilt—forearms, hands, everything—and you came to know it was going to be a long, tough day. Sometimes things got so bad that Jerry Kramer, Bob Skoronski, Fuzzy Thurston, and Forrest Gregg would gang up and beat the daylight out of him just to slow him up, because he’d run around clotheslining people and crashing into them, even the quarterbacks. He’d be always yelling in that rough, nagging voice of his, ‘Come on, let’s have some enthusiasm. Let’s get mentally . . .’ He came from the back side of Chicago somewhere. Just a constant stream of chatter until finally Lombardi—although he liked a lot of spirit—would call out:

“‘Hey, Nitschke.’

“‘Yes, sir?’

“‘Shaddup.’

“But what he was—well, he was Lombardi’s instrument to instill fear. Lombardi would

**“You can tell when you’re finished. The difference is perhaps half a step in speed. Just several weeks of not quite getting there would tell you.”**

Fred Marcellino









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say something like 'I'm going to use fear on you guys, it motivates you. I'm going to make you afraid. I know you're not afraid of the physical aspects of football, or you wouldn't be here. But you *are* afraid of embarrassment in front of your peers. That's what I'm going to do to you, embarrass you, humiliate you until you do the job.'

"I didn't really know what Lombardi meant until one day he said, 'Well, now we're going to have a blitz drill.' In a blitz drill, the middle linebacker comes charging toward the line. The center is supposed to drop straight back about three yards, set his feet, and then hit the middle linebacker before he gets to the passer. Nitschke was at middle linebacker, and I wasn't at all afraid of him. But the first time he hit me was the hardest I'd ever been hit in my life. He knocked me down. A bit stunned, I got up and I thought, Well, I'll hit him that way next time. But I couldn't seem to do it! It's a skill that takes time to cultivate, to drop back that quickly and get your feet set. Of course, Nitschke had some advantages. He was a veteran player and a great linebacker; also he knew the snap count and he knew the plays. Not only that, but he would jump the snap count. He'd come up close to the line of scrimmage and be almost by me before I could hit him. And I was not allowed to cut him low in the legs because he had bad knees. I never did get to where I could block him on those plays. Once he broke my headgear with his forearm. On another occasion he snapped my chin strap with just the sheer force of his blow. Every time I missed him, Lombardi would go into a tantrum: 'Godammit, Curry, can't you move! Can't you do anything!' And then a strange thing happened: I began to dread those practice sessions with blitz drills—with a fear that I had never experienced before in my whole life. I suddenly understood about the fear that Lombardi said he was going to instill in us."

I asked Bill what would have happened if he'd gone to Lombardi and said, "Godammit, Nitschke's beating the snap count on me. Why the hell doesn't he play it square?!"

"Oh boy!" Curry said. "If I'd've done that, he would've said, 'Godammit, son, I didn't ask you to come and tell me how to conduct drills. If you can't block him, then get your ass off the field! I don't ever want to see you again!'"

"One day this strange thing happened with Nitschke," Curry went on. "Do you know what a cut block is? You drive out at the man as if you were going to hit him about chest high, and when he lunges to meet you with his forearm you suddenly dip down and hit him

around the knees and knock him down. It's a technique that I've made a living off of almost my whole career. Well, you don't do it in practice. It's just an unwritten rule—it's almost a *written* rule. You just *don't* cut your teammates; it's too dangerous to the knees. This day we were practicing running plays. Lombardi was always fussing around the huddle and sticking his head in. 'All right now, I want you to run a thirty-six.' Bart Starr, the quarterback, didn't like that sort of thing. He'd say: 'Wait just a minute. I'm running this huddle.' And Lombardi would step back. But this time Lombardi stuck his head in and he stayed there. He said: 'Curry, I want you to cut Nitschke.'

"What?"

"He said, 'I want you to cut Nitschke down on his ass!'"

"Not only did Nitschke have a couple of bad knees, as I was telling you, but he didn't even have any knee pads, or thigh pads. But what was I going to say to Lombardi? Nothing. I snapped the ball and I fired a pass and I cut Nitschke, really knocked him down. I thought he'd probably get up and just hit me; he'd kick me in the face or something. He didn't say a word. Everybody called: 'He got a good block! That's-a-way to git 'im,' 'cause everybody got mad at Ray during practice for always knocking people's heads off. So I was kind of proud of myself and very relieved. I came back to the huddle beaming. Lombardi stood there. He wasn't smiling or saying anything. He said: 'Hit him again.' I just went pale, 'Oh no. Oh, Jeez, what . . .' So I went out, and I cut him down again. Nitschke didn't say a word. When I got back Lombardi said: 'Now, see there? You got him.'

"So Lombardi would do things like that to try to build your confidence and to help you, I suppose, and also because maybe he knew that Nitschke needed a taste of that notoriety Lombardi had about fear."

"I like it that he never complained," I said.

Curry looked across at me. "You can handle him," he said. "The rest of my time with Nitschke was a steady, humiliating, demeaning punishment. All my life my reaction has been if you push me, or cross me, I'll fight. I fight a lot. On the field I play at a high level of combativeness. It's just not civil out there. One afternoon Ray hit me a lot; he snapped my chin strap. Then he hit me again. So I hit him and I started pushing at him—exactly the sort of preliminaries that invariably lead to a fistfight. But he wouldn't do me the favor of hitting back; he wouldn't deign to fight a rookie. He said, 'Kid, what the hell's wrong with you?' Like flicking off a mosquito."



It humiliated me. With everybody looking on, I couldn't even get the satisfaction of getting my ass whipped by this guy.

**F**OUR YEARS LATER, after I had become a Colt, we went back to Green Bay to play the Packers. I kept thinking of Nitschke. I told the Baltimore coaching staff, 'I'll bet they're going to blitz a lot because they think Nitschke can beat me.' They were skeptical, because, according to their scouting reports, the Packer defense blitzed only 5 percent of the time, and rarely with the middle linebacker. Of course I was hoping they'd try, because by this time I had become much more proficient in the art of picking up blitzes.

"That day Nitschke blitzed 75 percent of the plays. It started with the first play of the game, and it went on all the way through. He never touched the quarterback, never got within five yards of him. It was one of the most satisfying games of my whole career. I *hit* him and struck him down. All of this sounds so vindictive—and it was. I took tremendous pleasure in using every *ounce* to smash him with, because of all the humiliation he had caused me.

"Then, the last time I saw him was in 1972. I was with the Oilers, and we were in Milwaukee to play the Packers in our third exhibition game. I walked into the lobby of the Pfister Hotel, looked around, and there was Nitschke. It was as if I'd walked through a time warp. There he sat, with his gleaming dome, surveying what had been his for many years. He was trying to 'struggle back for his fifteenth year as an NFL linebacker, but, from what I was hearing through the grapevine, he was not making it. I felt very awkward trying to speak to this man who had broken me into the NFL in such a rigorous fashion. The conversation went something like 'Gee, Ray, how are you? How's Jackie? How're the kids?' 'Oh, Bill, they're fine. We just got a little girl'—they've adopted, I think, three children now. Then there was an awkward pause, and he suddenly blurted out: 'Bill, I can play. I can go. I can do it.' And I said, 'Well, I heard you were going to play tonight.' He said, 'I don't know about that, but I can go.' He looked at me and he said, 'If I do get to play, you better buckle it up.' I said, 'Well, I've always had to buckle it up against you.' He said, 'Yeah, but I'm fighting for my life this time.' Man, it was sad!

"That night it was worse. The game was bad, as usual. We got behind by 17 to nothing in just a matter of half a quarter; we

came back and made it 17 to 14 but then went on to lose the game by something like 34 to 14. With about five minutes left, 50,000 people in County Stadium began to chant: '*We want Nitschke! We want Nitschke!*' I stood on the sidelines watching Ray. He didn't move. It was as if he were a statue. It reminded me of Dan Sullivan's great line about John Unitas: 'Unitas is the only guy whose number they tried to retire while he was still in the jersey.' That was what was happening to Ray, and it was very sad. They never did put him in the game.

"After the game I ran over to him and took the hand of this man who had stomped me physically and emotionally during my first two years with the Packers, and I said, 'Ray, I've never thanked you for what you did for me.' I meant it sincerely, because he helped to make me a lot tougher than I'd ever been. He had not gone about it very pleasantly, but he had meant to help me improve, and I think we both knew that. And I said, 'Ray, I've never thanked you.' He said, 'Yes you have. There're a lot of ways of saying thanks besides verbally.'

"I watched him run off the County Stadium field for the last time. That big number sixty-six and that unique gait of his, leaning forward, huge shoulders and arms pumping slightly, skinny calves. I realized that I had just touched a legend and was seeing him brought down by the very sport he had helped build. I've seen the same happen to Unitas and Tom Matte and others.

"Players think their careers are going to go on forever. Most of them don't prepare for the day it ends. They don't take off-season jobs. Their excuse is 'Well, there's always July,' meaning that another training season is rolling around, one more July, and everything will be as it always was."

**B**ILL CURRY did not make it with the Packers that season. His knee held up better than he thought it would, but he developed a hamstring muscle-pull that kept bothering him. During most of the scrimmages he stood on the sidelines watching two younger centers taking turns at his position.

Quitting was not as hard as he imagined it was for a man like Nitschke. But it had been a closing out, a frightening sense of cessation, and when he told me about it over the phone I remembered Dylan Thomas's line "After the first death there is no other."

Yes, Bill said. He thought that was an appropriate enough sentiment. □

**"Most players don't take off-season jobs. Their excuse is 'Well, there's always July,' meaning that another training season is rolling around, one more July, and everything will be as it always was."**



# LOOKING FOR THE LOST

## MAFIA

by Rufus King

Like the Abominable Snowman, the Mafia is sometimes very hard to see

**I**T IS SUPPOSEDLY an omniscient and sinister body, the American Mafia. Yet it did nothing about the recent rise to power of Don Carlo, alias Sgt. Karl W. Mattis, eighteen years on the District of Columbia Police Force, blue eyes, gray hair, and no Sicilian forebears. Last February, on a chilly Saturday night, Sergeant Mattis sat in the back room of an unheated Washington warehouse while more than 100 underworld figures, many decked out in rented tuxedos, filed past him to pay respect. A few knelt and kissed his wedding ring (the sergeant is the father of six children). All he could think of to say was, "Bless you. Bless you, my sons."

Sergeant Mattis was winding up a remarkable law-enforcement enterprise, launched five months earlier as PFF, Inc.—a wry acronym for Police FBI Fencing, Incognito—and quickly renamed "the Sting" by its victims. His role, like much of the scenario, was improvised. During preparations for the final party (behind signs on the warehouse doors, "Closed

—Italian Holiday") he had strained his back stacking stolen typewriters. It hurt him to stand, so when he reported for the evening he was given a chair in a corner. When guests began arriving, his colleagues, "Pasquale Larocca" (Detective Patrick Lilly, with dyed blond hair), "Mike Franzino" (FBI Agent Michael Hartman), "Angelo Lasagna" from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division of the Treasury Department, and other officers answering to names like "Rico Rigatone," "Bohana La Fontaine," and "Tony Bonano," began pointing to Sergeant Mattis and murmuring, "Show respect—the don himself is here." They soon improved on this by searching and disarming each newcomer at the door, apologetically, "as a protection for the don."

On the street side of the warehouse were gleaming limousines borrowed as props. At the back, guests were moved on, after Sergeant Mattis's benediction, to the last rooms, where uniformed officers handcuffed and tagged them to be herded into patrol wagons and rented

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rucks for the trip to headquarters. One guest arrived in handcuffs—he had been arrested on robbery charge that afternoon and had escaped in time for the party.

There were no touchy episodes. Some guests were in fact relieved when it dawned on them this was a *real* police operation and not some kind of St. Valentine's Day rub-out. But what perplexed them most was how the omnipotent Mafia, and the godfather himself, could be tolerating such insolent interference.

## The invisible conspiracy

**W**HAT IS THIS shadowy union that has supposedly proved too much for the law-enforcement resources of this great nation for three-quarters of a century? The first significant reference to the Mafia in the United States was in New Orleans in 1891. A lynch mob of the town's leading citizens hanged and shot eleven "dagos" who, after a lengthy trial, had just been found not guilty of ambushing Police Chief David C. Hennessy. Chief Hennessy had been killed in an Italian slum, and as he expired he had told his faithful lieutenant, Billy O'Connor, "They got me, Bill." These dying words, it was claimed, established the existence of an Italian "murder society" and justified the lynchings.

Thereafter, the wily Sicilians stayed mostly out of sight until December 1928, when some twenty bootleggers, predominantly Italian, were arrested in a Cleveland hotel, photographed by the press, and run out of town. The Cleveland police claimed credit, and were widely praised, for breaking up a sinister council of "alleged Mafia leaders." Twenty-three years later, the Senate Crime Investigating Committee relied heavily on that 1928 Cleveland picture as "one notable concrete piece of evidence" that mafiosi were still holding the nation tightly by the throat. Two of the subjects refused to tell Chairman Estes Kefauver in 1951 what they had been doing there two decades earlier, and hoodlum witnesses with Italian-sounding names laughed rudely when they were accused of belonging.

Kefauver's first two reports, in 1950, talked of the "mob" and the "syndicate," but made no reference to the Mafia. Persuading Kefauver to about-face was a personal triumph for Harry J. Anslinger, of the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics, over his arch-rival, J. Edgar Hoover. The G-men scorned the Mafia, never cluttering their ten-most-wanted list with Italians, and even leaving Al Capone to the then Bureau of Internal Revenue. However, the Sicilian con-

spiracy—sinister, exotic, worldwide, and quite invisible except to Narcotics Bureau "experts"—was made to order for Anslinger's purposes.

There were, indisputably, notorious Italian-American racket figures left over (with Humphreyses and Siegels and Lanskys) from rum-running days. After Repeal many went into illegal gambling, where they were easy to find because gambling, necessarily a retail business, comes quickly to the notice of local authorities. Kefauver's counsel, Rudolph Halley, selected a few of the easiest targets and commenced building them up until their names emerged as household words. Committee witnesses who started "taking the Fifth" would be led through the whole list—Luciano, Accardo, Genovese, Costello, Giancana, Marcello—and asked if each wasn't indeed an odious kingpin of crime.

The Eisenhower Administration played down organized crime, but Anslinger continued to promote the Mafia on Capitol Hill (and Hoover to debunk it), and then the Kennedy forces, grooming John for his 1960 try, installed Robert as counsel to Senator McClellan's Select Committee on Labor Practices, and began developing *his* image as a fearless gangbuster.

Kennedy, in turn, was one-upped by Lyndon Johnson, who moved to prevent any exploitation of the crime theme by Kennedy image-builders on Capitol Hill. On July 23, 1965, Johnson created the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, to examine "every facet of crime and law enforcement in America." One of the task forces set up by this commission was charged with making a fresh assessment of organized crime. It reached as far as possible from Washington (to California), and into a tenuously related discipline (academic sociology), to recruit its sole expert consultant on "criminal syndicates."

Not unexpectedly, the organized crime section of the commission's elaborate report, released in February 1967, was one of its weakest. As proof that organized crime "has an impact on American life" it noted that Frank Costello formerly "lived in an expensive apartment . . . was often seen dining in well-known restaurants . . . was shaved in the barbershop of the Waldorf . . . [and] played golf at a country club on the fashionable North Shore of Long Island." It declared that there were exactly twenty-four Cosa Nostra families in America, that their membership was "exclusively Italian," and that they function smoothly because they are all run by "a national body of overseers."

**"Three-fourths of those trapped in the PFF operation had prior criminal records; a shocking 48 percent were on parole or probation; and a score were actually on bail or bail-less release awaiting trial."**



Rufus King  
LOOKING  
FOR THE  
LOST MAFIA

**N**OBODY HAD A Mafia scenario in mind when PFF was launched. Last fall the Office Theft Squad found it had accumulated an unusual number of reports of stolen office machines, typewriters, copiers, and calculators—items which are usually identifiable by serial numbers. None seemed to be turning up in ordinary fencing channels. So an enterprising lieutenant, Robert D. Arscott, obtained permission to set up an undercover operation to see if he could recover some of these items and find out where others were going.

Because some thefts had been from federal buildings, Arscott's opposite number in the local FBI office, Special Agent Robert E. Lill, and an undercover agent from Treasury were detailed to work with him. A few other policemen were brought in, and two members of the colorful street force famous for, among other things, the Watergate arrests, worked to spread word of the operation around town. The secret was so well kept that although both the underworld and the law-enforcement community soon became aware of PFF, as did street-wise bartenders and cabdrivers, no one doubted its bona fides.

The empty warehouse was obtained cheaply because its heating system was broken. At first, money for buys was begged from local businesses which had been burglary targets, but later it was furnished by the participating agencies. A procedure was developed to control each buy: the customer had to call a special number from a booth down the street for permission to come in (sometimes there would be lines waiting there); as each came from the booth to the warehouse, Detective Lilly, who usually ran the front counter, would note the date, the time, the customer's identity, and a control number on a TV clapboard, and hold it up to one of the concealed video cameras. To assure good mug shots, one camera was placed behind a two-way mirror plastered with lewd pin-ups.

Because they were handing out cash, \$67,000 all told, and accumulating items of great value, \$2.4 million worth by the end of the operation, there was constant danger that the PFF team might itself be robbed. Special Agent Hartman often stood by with a loaded shotgun while customers were inside, and the others bristled with weapons. They also tried to act and sound like the toughest, most dangerous outfit that had ever hit town: "Hey Patty, open up. We gotta stiff in the trunk. Whadda we do?" "Tossa him in the freeze." An informer, one of the many who were reporting the operation to enforcement agencies all over the area, became so terrified by what

they said they did to traitors and turncoats that he called his police contact again to claim he had been mistaken and there really was no PFF after all.

The team had decided to use as its cover story the line that underworld interests in New York had set up PFF to buy stolen items for the Gotham market. That way local thieves would not worry about the reappearance of traceable items under their owners' noses. The officers, with no Italian ancestry and no more than a dozen cliché Italian phrases among them, were drawn into the rest of the charade by their customers.

Everyone knows New York crime is tightly monopolized by five Cosa Nostra families, right? So the question *had to be*, well, you know, fellows . . . which one? Two of the police participants built like wrestlers (one actually a champion weightlifter) *must be*, hey, real hit men, right? "Okay, Rocco—you wanna we justa maim this guy?" "Naw, you takka him off hissa goddamn head."

The taller the tales, the safer each side felt dealing with the other. PFF customers *wanted* to believe what they were surmising, and soon Pasquale/Lilly, the wild man on the counter who might suddenly test-fire a proffered stolen gun, or sneeringly tear up cashier's checks and credit cards that did not take his fancy, began to hear interesting boasts in return. Everyone who dealt with PFF was pressed for identification, an obvious precaution against police informers and infiltrating rivals. Customers nervously gave their Social Security numbers, produced drivers' licenses, furnished birth information—and if they also volunteered reassurances about their own accomplishments in crime, so much the better.

Business done at the warehouse exceeded all expectations. Pasquale bought everything, at surprisingly low prices. Seventeen U.S. Treasury checks totaling \$1.2 million, drawn by the Housing and Urban Development Department, cost him \$750. *Any* stolen car or truck could be had for \$100, and Lieutenant Arscott whimsically returned nearly a score of them to the reserved parking place of the precinct commander at the headquarters of the precinct from which they had been stolen. Hundreds of credit cards were recovered, along with a fortune in savings bonds and securities, mountains of typewriters, calculators, copiers, televisions, and stereos, and several pieces of sophisticated medical equipment stolen from a city hospital.

When a deal was made, the customer might be offered a glass of Chianti, or a pour-it-yourself shot of whiskey—for fingerprints. Later, when things got busier, newcomers would be



handed a plate with one of Angelo's mama's special home-cooked Italian meatballs.

Operation Sting had to be wound up after five months because the warehouse filled with loot, and the necessary paperwork began to swamp the team (they and their small backup detail are now known among their colleagues as "the sweatogs"). Each item as it came in had to be listed on Police Department forms, tagged and catalogued, and identified with its related videotape. Investigative leads accumulated by the thousands (each purchase with each recovered credit card, for example), yet obviously if investigating detectives fanned out very far, PFF would be "burned." There was also a problem with approaching statutory limitations in some of the major cases; and of course the warehouse contents, after use as evidence, would have to be returned to as many rightful owners as could be found.

The windup party was announced as a celebration of PFF's resounding success. The New York connection had worked well for everyone; higher-ups were pleased; Pasquale and his friends were likely to be promoted. There would be women (some pimps did indeed arrive with their charges), door prizes, plenty to drink—and, for those who needed it, junk.

Collecting so many prisoners at one time and place saved thousands of police man-hours. Several dozen additional guests, who did not turn up on time, were provided with transportation in patrol cars the same night. Incredibly, customers kept coming to the warehouse the following week, despite front-page stories and feature news broadcasts detailing every aspect of the operation. "We heard about it, but we couldn't believe it was *you* guys!"

The five months of the PFF operation provided a unique view of the *real* underworld. Its statistical results are a true core sample (189 arrests so far): three-fourths of those trapped had prior criminal records; a shocking 48 percent were on parole or probation, and a score were actually on bail or bail-less release awaiting trial in the District's overworked courts; one-third (*only* one-third) were drug users, and more than half of these were enrolled in some local drug "treatment" program. As for the workings of probation, the sting team took a number of calls from probation officers whose charges claimed they were working for PFF, and Pasquale would respond, "Oh yes, he's a good worker and brings lots of business." No one ever came around to check.

Most interesting of all, however, was the absence of any genuine Italian connection in any quarter. These career officers, with access to the intelligence resources of the nation's

greatest law-enforcement agencies, had to improvise their Mafia roles from Hollywood and the fantasies of the real-life criminals they were deceiving. No one from the Five Families in their stronghold 200 miles away, supposedly so omniscient, so powerful, so jealous and so ruthless, ever showed up to punish Pasquale's impudence or take over his flourishing enterprise. The mice gamboled under the cat's nose for five months. And nothing happened.

Because the cat was never there.

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### Crime research pays

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**T**HE OMNIBUS CRIME Control and Safe Streets Act, signed by President Johnson on June 19, 1968, created a new agency, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. The LEAA first gave out lavish federal "planning grants" to each state, and then poured money into whatever the planners planned, and into its own projects as well. Of the \$4.5 billion spent so far, no less than \$500 million could fairly be claimed as the share of organized crime—crimefighters, researchers, gadget-makers, and project and conference sponsors. Unlikely places such as Mississippi and South Dakota have organized-crime drives under way (the latter against Sicilian involvement in fraudulent grain deals).

Universities have set up whole new subdepartments. Private research and consulting enterprises have emerged as a substantial rags-to-riches growth industry. Smart money from the private foundations has followed. Institutes and councils set up to be "clearinghouses" provide sheltered employment for a whole corps of academicians. There are real career opportunities for anyone imaginative enough to become a crime "expert." Even some of the very poorest "as-told-to" exposés of recent years acknowledge five-figure subsidies from the nation's great philanthropic trusts. And the end is nowhere in sight. President Ford recently sought a new commitment of almost \$7 billion to keep the LEAA pouring out funds through 1981.

In 1965 Senator McClellan published a roster of some 600 Cosa Nostra leaders, listed by "family," complete with names, aliases, and FBI file numbers. Beginning in January 1967 in Buffalo, the Department of Justice set up Organized Crime Strike Forces, often with LEAA assistance, to camp permanently in each city where these leaders and their Cosa Nostra families are supposed to be entrenched. Usually headed by one or more Justice Depart-

**"There has been no serious reassessment of the Mafia since the 1950s. So long as the money keeps flowing, neither mercenary scholars nor affluent crime-fighters want to jeopardize a good thing."**







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## Bell System



Rufus King  
LOOKING  
FOR THE  
LOST MAFIA

ment attorneys from Washington (where the headquarters Organized Crime Section in the Criminal Division now numbers 160), each force has full- or part-time representatives from Immigration, Customs, Narcotics, IRS, Secret Service, Labor, and Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms attached to it. Sometimes local police or prosecutors, and sometimes the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, participate. Some forces also have a live-in postal inspector, or an SEC investigator. Sometimes the FBI itself deigns to join. In 1968 Detroit, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, Newark, and Miami got their forces; in 1970 units were set up in Boston, New York, Cleveland, Los Angeles, St. Louis, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and San Francisco; and in 1971 Kansas City and a supergroup in Washington, D.C. were added. All these strike forces are still diligently pursuing their quarry, except in Baltimore, where, it is reported, the members rebelled and asked to be reassigned to more realistic law-enforcement efforts.

With so many available experts, the current membership of the Cosa Nostra is definitely fixed at 2,000, 3,000, and 5,000; the number of individual members known by name is also somewhere in that spread. In their seven-year assault, the strike forces claim a total of 6,101 convictions, of which 375 were "high-echelon figures" and two or three were reputedly either godfathers or close relatives of godfathers.

Despite all this concentration of effort and expenditure, there has been no serious reassessment of the Mafia, and no evident concern for the realities of organized crime since the 1950s. One explanation may be that so long as the money keeps flowing, neither mercenary scholars nor affluent crimefighters want to jeopardize a good thing. Another—and this is why the money *will* keep flowing—is the irresistible attraction of war-on-crime posturing for politicians: the President safely exhorts Congress to eradicate crime by new legislation, and Congress shies away from effective measures, favoring instead exhortative statements of principle, overdrafted patchwork, and increased billions in anticrime funds.

An honest criminal prohibition aimed straight at conspiracies using interstate commerce to commit "organized crime" offenses, e.g., to violate gambling, usury, drug, and labor-practice statutes already on the books, could be written in fewer words than are in one of these columns. The Lindbergh Kidnapping Act, which *was* forthright, takes fewer than sixteen lines in the U.S. Code.

In contrast, the crime laws Congress has passed recently are shockingly elaborate. The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act

of 1968, already mentioned, ran to forty-nine pages; the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970 ran to fifty-nine, and the Omnibus Crime Control Act of the same year took fifteen more; the Crime Control Act of 1973 filled twenty-seven pages; and the 1970 Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act required a record seventy-one pages. Some of these enactments are patently designed not to work very well; some, such as a law providing disguises and "new lives" for fearful witnesses, are silly; and many are loaded with unnecessary and crippling limitations (gambling operations are, for instance, illegal only if they are proved to be "business," bring in more than \$2,000 per day, or run for thirty days, and are not managed by fewer than five people).

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### A service business

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**E**VEN IF IT could be believed that these Sicilian characters have truly been too much for all the law enforcement resources of this great nation, does "organized crime" itself really justify so much alarm? The activities of organized crime are entirely directed to providing some kind of service, for money, to people who want it and will pay (even including Murder, Inc.). The twenty-four families are supposed to thrive most of all on their nationwide monopoly of illegal gambling. But what difference does it make who runs gambling? Something like two-thirds of the supposed Mafia members sent to prison are there for gambling offenses. Yet states, cities, churches, charities, and private promoters are now trampling one another to get at the public first with new gambling schemes.

Loan-sharking? Isn't that only a pejorative name for usury (as on Wall Street a nicer name for gambling is "speculation")? But in most states there is no usury protection for corporations, and in much of the country bankers use "points," discounts, and premiums to push interest above usury limits as far as the traffic will bear. Even assuming the Mafia were making risky loans to people who can't borrow from Household Finance, why not? If anyone, banker or hoodlum, collects debts by physical violence, that becomes the crime of assault. And don't landlords, aided by all the righteous majesty of the law, sometimes inflict comparable trauma when they throw delinquent rent-payers and their families into the street?

Any suggestion that drug-trafficking might be something less than Anslinger's "murder



the installment plan" will impose a heavier burden of argument with most readers, but only because Americans have been so thoroughly saturated with so much official nonsense for so long. The "dope fiend" mythology is a full fifty years older than that of the Mafia. Yet the truth is that our drug laws and exaggerated enforcement policies, unique in the Western world, have given the United States none a major drug "problem." We are the primary target for smugglers, and the only nation seriously committed to "war" on this front. And we are a laughingstock: bribing and bullying the Turks to give up their poppy-growing ways is as ridiculous as a Turkish campaign in Kentucky to free Istanbul of deadly cigarette tobacco.

The nation's addict population (as invisible as the Cosa Nostra itself) is arbitrarily estimated by official experts at anything between 100,000 and 600,000. An addict without his drug of addiction "kicks" in a few days, and would cease to be hooked. So, apart from some thousands in full methadone treatment, *someone* has been providing drugs to this population in an unbroken daily flow for three generations. And all the odious army of narks has ever done is drive prices up, subsidize the world black market, and tighten the street pusher's cruel monopoly. Until medical and health authorities grow brave enough to return to their responsibilities in the field, the drug peddler's services might even be defended as humanitarian. He is only doing what doctors do in other civilized countries.

Most episodes of big-time labor racketeering were stale memories even when the McClellan Committee viewed them in 1959. There was indeed a time when the labor movement camouflaged widespread extortion, and when both workers and employers suffered at the hands of outside bullies. But even the Mafia could not get far today muscling Fitzsimons's Teamsters, or George Meany, or the United Mine Workers. Little rip-offs here and there on the labor scene, even by men with arrest records and Italian-sounding names, are no longer a national *cause de guerre*. The same is true of prostitution; there isn't much left for organized crime to organize (though it is now being reported that the Mafia is sewing up pornography, blue films, and massage parlors).

Finally, these feared Sicilians are not even all that deadly. In the good old days, a lusty gang war might dispose of a score or more public enemies conveniently all at once at each other's hands (and they never killed many outsiders). But now supposedly family-dominated cities go for years at a stretch with-

out any "gangland slayings." Moreover, some of the most publicized hits attributed to the Cosa Nostra in recent years do not quite bear the traditional Mafia trademark. Joey Gallo's demise would qualify, maybe. But Joe Colombo, the maverick who organized a picket line at the New York FBI headquarters to protest harassment of Italian-Americans, who forced Attorney General Mitchell to forbid further use of *Mafia* and *Cosa Nostra* by anyone in his Justice Department (a ban which is, incidentally, alleged to be still in force), and who embarrassed the whole law-enforcement establishment with his Italian-American Civil Rights League, was shot by a black gunman at a league rally in a crowd swarming with police. Colombo survived, but the black man was then pinioned instantly and killed in an Oswald-Ruby one-two. Or consider Sam Giancana, an old Chicago mobster who once sued the FBI and won a federal injunction against harassment by Hoover's agents, and who had survived everything since the 1920s, until June 19, 1975, when he was felled by a wholly atypical .22 pistol, in his own basement while a local police stakeout lounged on the street outside. Giancana was about to be summoned to Washington to tell a Senate committee of his negotiations with the CIA to arrange an attempt on Fidel Castro.

To credit La Cosa Nostra with a few dozen, or even a few hundred hits per year would not say much for it: the number of felony murders (murders committed in connection with some other crime) tallied by the FBI in the United States in 1975 was 6,645.

**W**HAT DOES IT MATTER if the only honest benefit to law enforcement from the whole eighty-year Mafia fantasy was Operation Sting (honest because at last, for once, criminals, instead of the long-suffering public, were deceived)?

It matters very much, since important responses to the real challenges of crime are completely distorted by the Mafia fixation. Incompetence, and almost certainly grave corruption as well, are excused on the ground that this mythical adversary is beyond reach. Billions are being squandered, and vast effort is being wasted, in activities that are, to put it mildly, misdirected. Respect for law enforcement is undermined. Cooperation between—as well as public cooperation with—enforcement agencies is discouraged.

And in the end, asking you and me to go on swallowing this preposterous bunk is . . . just . . . plain . . . insulting. □

**"Until medical and health authorities grow brave enough to return to their responsibilities in the field, the drug peddler's services might even be defended as humanitarian."**





## NOTES ON THE CHILDREN'S BOOK TRADE

All is not well in tinsel town

by John Goldthwaite

*When I was a little girl, I was satisfied with about six books. . . . I think that children now have too many.*  
—Beatrix Potter

**N**O CHILDREN'S BOOK publisher would dream of suggesting that he was in business for reasons other than to bring children what Walter de la Mare, the librarians' darling, called "only the rarest kind of best." With 80 percent of the sales of the more than 2,000 titles published each year going to institutions staffed by the secular legions of the muse, allowing any motive less noble would be folly. A children's publisher, to succeed, must assume the guise of doing good deeds, and to do that he must keep the muse, old and toothless though she be, out front in a rocker, gumming platitudes. Some publishers and editors are not insincere about this. "Excellent children's books do get published. On the other hand, the department must profit the house; each editor must earn his keep. That means marketing a whole heap of books that are less than good, and warehouses of books that are downright awful. Every trifle must be decked out as handsomely as possible, every

author and illustrator made out to be God's gift to children. This requires a certain suspension of disbelief on the part of publisher and editor, and inevitably some insensibility will set in, until the publisher and the editor, and soon the librarians as well, can themselves no longer tell the difference between a work of art and a commodity.

Sales now assume their spurious legitimacy; the search for excellence is lost to the art of the hype. Librarians, be it noted, do not buy books in hand but promises out of catalogues and trade reviews that read like a cross between a card-catalogue entry and a publicity release. The publishers' easy optimism and librarians' frequent lapses of literary discretion, riding high on public moneys and the lack of resistance from most quarters, enable endless crates of stuff to be bought sight unseen. It is a nice piece of work for the many writers and illustrators who have come to this lucrative field from the only incidentally literate worlds of the kitchen and the commercial arts. Really, it is a nice piece of

*John Goldthwaite is the author of six children's books, including The Kidnapping of the Coffee Pot by "Kaye Saari."*

work for everyone, for there is much at stake beyond literature—careers, prizes, income, fame; and often, as one Caldecott Medal winner pointed out, paying the bills may call for the production of two and preferably four titles a year, every year, forever.

So the proliferation of pretty little books must continue unabated, and not only unabated but celebrated. A multi-billion-dollar industry knows no law but the momentum of its own survival. The prizes must come thick and fast; the muse be rocked more and more quickly. Sooner or later some enthusiast will conjure up an aesthetic that makes it all ring good and true. College courses will spring up coast to coast. The people at the paper mills will be happy, the printers, the binders, and jobbers will be happy. The entrepreneur who manufactures the little chairs kids sit in during story hours can add another snowmobile to the family fleet.

**P**EOPLE WITH a vested interest in children's books suffer from feelings of cultural inferiority. They are also hungry for the prestige of yesteryear,



# *I asked our creative people:* Why use print?

*By Carl Hixon  
Chairman of the Creative Review  
Leo Burnett U.S.A.*

Worrying that I might be as retarded as the rest of the advertising industry regarding print and its creative possibilities, perhaps because I had been a vice president too long, I went into the kitchen and talked to the cooks. I queried the entire Leo Burnett Creative Department, asking:

"When and why do you like using print?"

Here is a sampling of answers, some of them matter-of-fact, others innovative and a few downright mystical:

"Nothing brands like print."

"When the product has a print soul."

"When my copy runneth over."

"When the television legals are after me."

"When I want complete control over production of the finished advertisement."

"When I need a touch of class (because television seems to make all things common)."

"When a very simple idea can be posterized."

"It's a terrible burden to have to persuade someone in 30 seconds."

"When I want to touch the conscience of my audience."

"When you can't even recite the strategy in 30 seconds."

"When you're selling hearing aids."

"You can choose your company in print but not in television because networks have neutral personalities."

*\*Or her, as the case may be.*



To know about print it helps to know about print writing and print writers (print art directors, too). A print-chromosomed copywriter has a second sight into his\* medium. He understands that out there between all those pages are creative opportunities of cosmic proportions, but worries that everyone is too mind-set or chicken to try them.

These are some of the things he knows:

What a magazine does best is surround us with beloved objects, and information on how to use them, so that reading a magazine we become like gleeful little kids. This is the mood in which the print writer can court us—full of lovely, selfish feelings and wanting intimate things to be divulged.

Gentleness is a virtue, subtlety a persuasive tool in print. Ideas we privately approve but seldom recommend for TV because they lack bite or grab often flower profitably in some quiet meadow of print, soliciting the reader with sweet reasonableness and sanity.

Many products simply don't come to life within 30 seconds; not that they are complicated and need explaining, but because they exist on a grander scale and must be perceived longer. Anything less amounts to *lèse-majesté* and fails to express their inherent drama.

Besides being expansive in print, you can be baroque, grappling reader to ad with dozens of Lilliputian attractions. This is an exclusive property of print. In the hands of a gifted copywriter (and art director) it is worth a dozen finely focused commercials.

Psychologically, print writing is tougher than television writing. An artful presentation won't postpone the ash can, nor is there a collective responsibility shelter for the many collaborators on the finished product, should disaster strike. Don't look for cosmetic help from the director or music man. Don't expect lucky accidents on the set. The author and his ad—both naked and vulnerable—stand side by side in the harsh light of the conference room, awaiting summary judgment. Print writing builds men.

Most beginning writers have a blinkered bias towards television, believing their career tracks will be swifter and smoother in this medium. This is unwise in an evolving industry and society where some of the biggest budgets are now spent largely, even exclusively, in non-broadcast media. A creative novice today should aim to be an all-court player or he'll never make it—least of all at an agency like Leo Burnett, where many of our greatest case histories have been and will continue to be print-intensive.

Finally, I see by the papers that the newest business school theory to explain the role of advertising in our economy champions the advertising profession (double take!) because it distributes information to consumers which they would not otherwise get and thereby decreases alleged monopoly power. So as the original and still senior information dispenser, print now looks stronger than ever as a strategic medium.

I think we'd better think it through again.



when children's books were the Cinderella of literature. Accordingly, they are eager to promote the illusion that the present day is a second Golden Age, all aglitter with the glories of the picture book, and loud with the brave clatter of its mounted authors. To anyone not dazzled by the shine and show, the place may look suspiciously like tinsel town; but saying so can be a risky business. To point a finger is to get it lopped off. The replies awaiting those who would seek to rescue Cinderella from the ashes are prompt and humorless. If you don't like the books you see, snaps one voice, you haven't seen the right books. It is the illusion of people in the snug world of children's books that no one can read the "right" books and not love them. They have been turning up in tinsel town since the mid-Twenties at the rate of a dozen or so to half a hundred each year. Only the laziest malcontent could fail to see it.

The child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, an unlikely prince but one with his wits still intact, stuck up a finger recently in behalf of Cinderella, and, as was to be expected, they took a good whack at it. Dr. Bettelheim's serious critical study of fairy tales, *The Uses of Enchantment*, is exactly the kind of book that you would expect children's authors, critics, and librarians to have written many times over. The truth is, what good essays we have on children's stories are the work of such gifted amateurs as J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, or of folklorists such as Iona and Peter Opie. They have come, in other words, from everywhere but inside the field of children's books itself, where the most popular form of disquisition seems to be the after-dinner speech. They ought to be a little embarrassed about this in tinsel town, but they are not. They are miffed. Not only has Dr. Bettelheim bested them at their own game, he has had the temerity to suggest that in contrast to the fairy tales modern children's books are shallow and at cross-purposes with their didactic aims: "Strictly realistic stories run counter to the child's inner experience... [and] inform without enriching." Illustrated storybooks "direct the child's imagination away from how he, on his own, would experience the story." "The trouble with some of what is considered 'good children's literature' is that many of these stories peg the child's imagination to the level he has

already reached on his own. Children like such a story, but benefit little from it beyond momentary pleasure." And so on. A frightful man, this Freudian. *The Horn Book*, the most prestigious of all children's book journals, whose opinion of a book can make or break its library sales, gathers up her skirts and sniffs haughtily. Dr. Bettelheim is a carper. Shame!

Dr. Bettelheim might be dismayed to think that this is what his good work could come to, but he does not make his living writing for children and so can be excused for not caring less what *The Horn Book* thinks. A children's book author, on the other hand, has a much riskier time of it. Should he agree that modern children's books are shallow—and even dishonest—the people with the vested interests have his fortune and his personal honor squeezed tight in the notion that a children's author is by definition sweet and reasonable. Reasons for his lighting the fuse of disgust, reasons perhaps desperate and aesthetic and good enough for an incident or two of autocatharsis on the adult circuit, will at the great seminar on children's literature only soil his reputation as a good person, worthy to write for children. In the second Golden Age of Children's Books Hans Christian Andersen, to survive, must come whistling down the lane a certified Danny Kaye.

CHILDREN'S AUTHORS generally write in one of two ways, either to please children or to please themselves. The more numerous of them, those who write to please children, have traditionally been the purveyors of ephemera and dreck; those who write to please themselves have given us most of the best children's books we have, though they, too, have produced many sad and silly books of the sort penned by the old lady down the lane. The quality of literature is not threatened by the latter, the child is not deprived by them, but by the book consciously directed at the child and written presumably to his or her liking. This book, the "Chopsticks" of children's literature and virtually the only tune we hear being played today, has been deplored by nearly every writer on the subject who is not in thrall to the industry; yet it is what most people have been led to assume a good children's book to be, and so it

is precisely the sort of book—short of another *Babar* or *Charlotte's Web*—that every editor is most eager to publish. Each new season brings an avalanche of such kiddie confetti, and the air right now is thick with it. In addition to the usual superfluity of ABC counting books, folk tales "retold," holiday and Bicentennial specials, and other commercial artifacts, we have—many from notable authors out of the most reputable houses—such three-minute epics as *Oh, What a Busy Day*; *The Most Delicious Camping Trip Ever*; *A Special Birthday*; *A Wet Monday*; *Around Fred's Bed*; *Betsy and the Chicken Pox*; *Much Bigger Than Martin*; *Everett Anderson's Friend*; *My Teddy Bear*; *It's Not Fair!* *Two in a Company*; *A Little at a Time*; *I Love You, Mouse*; *I Like You*; *Like Me*; *I Tell on You*; *I'm Going to Run Away*; *I Wish I Was Sick, Too*; and *You Can Catch Me*.

No less numerous than your local author's home movies are Casper the Friendly Ghost cartoons—*Monster Mary*, *Mischief Maker* and *Clyde Monster*, for example—and cat tales. Writers and illustrators with only a few cute tricks to turn on paper can always be counted on for funny monsters and cats; indeed, some respectable careers have been built on the low but universal appeal of funny monsters and cats and precious little else. Sifting through the latest batch of kitty litter, we find *Count the Cats*, *More Cats*, *Oh, No Cat!*, *The Christmas Cat*, *The Conven Cat*, *The Post Office Cat*, *Kittens for Nothing*, *The Surprise Kitten*, *A Cat Called Amnesia*, and *Great Grandmother's Cat Tales*. Granny does rattle of these days. Who else but some venerable goodbody could be responsible for such geriatric titles as *Rupert Pipe and the Dear, Dear Birds*; *Coo-My Dove, My Dear*; or *Grandparent Around the World, Loving and Sharing?*

No more serious corruption of literature can be imagined than one which cheats children of their language even before they can read, and trivializes life before they have lived. Yet we are enjoying such an affluence of cultural frivolity that in the next few months librarians will, without blinking twice, spend tens of millions of tax dollars on these trifles. Call them educational toys, which many of them are, or pebbles, which are more rewarding, or funny T-shirts with too much starch, but do not call them literature. *Pinoch*



# CALENDAR ART 1977

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*chio* is literature and so is *Babar*. *Peter Rabbit*, *The Wind in the Willows*, the *Jungle Books*, and the tales of the Brothers Grimm are literature. Take a good look at the next picture book your child brings home. Is it really any different in kind from the Saturday cartoons and Sunday funnies which children's-book people profess to despise? Or is it just an episode, when you come right down to it, from a TV family sit-com; a dramatization from a mother's field notes on the neighborhood kids; a case study from a child-training manual; a bit of toothless Aesop; or one more imitation of any children's book that ever showed a profit or won a prize? It is called "children's literature," this bit of merchandise. It will probably win a prize. The author will move to Connecticut because 10,000 librarians said what the hell, and bought the thing. Children, because they cannot choose wisely for themselves, ought to be better served.

We have come to accept less and less and somehow the familiarity of it all comforts us. In a recently published fantasy the reward for saving the kingdom is not the kingdom but a roller-skating party. Sad, paltry fare, but fully in accord with our lowered expectations. Like most of the rest of us, editors hope to reduce life to a series of small, manageable moments, and so they encourage authors to find their stories close to home, in the everyday, and publish whatever comes of it: timid little thoughts about snowflakes and shoes, lunch pails, snails, and sidewalks; inane fables about losing friends, making friends, being fat, hating war, holding hands. The clichés are old and tired and suspicious even to children: there's no place like home, a boy's best friend is his mother, one step at a time, arms are for hugging. These are not good thoughts for children to grow on; they are the sentiments of adults writing to pacify the next generation, not excite it; to make the world a safer place for people without curiosity, dreams, or bravery. Such books as *The Happy Day*, *The Snowy Day*, *So What If It's Raining!*, *I Love My Mother*, *I Like Old Clothes*, *A Tree Is Nice*, *Hold My Hand*, *That Makes Me Mad!*, *The Unfriendly Book*, *The Quarreling Book*, *Just Me*, and thousands of homey primers as like them as clothespins on the line do little but suggest to the child, if only subliminally, that he is so small, so afraid,

and so blind that he cannot, as children have always done, discover the horrors and wonders of his backyard for himself, without some well-meaning, tedious grown-up playing tour guide. Apparently no one believes anymore that tales told by the fireside ought to be about the big, dangerous, rewarding world outside the door. Anatole France once wrote that children "find the writer who binds them in the contemplation of their own childhood a terrible bore," but senior editors throughout the industry have for some forty years been operating on a contrary assumption. They have made this the age of the domestic children's book—until now our best writers, housebroken, suffer from daring too little.

Our best writers have been in thrall to the domestic sensibility too long, and they have had to bow to the primacy of illustration too long. In so doing they have all but forgotten how to do what writers are supposed to do, which is use language to animate the world. Our worst writers, trying to please children by writing about childish things, think they have been able to do this in their stead. Whether or not they actually do please children is of little concern. You can please a child by slipping on a banana peel; it proves nothing. What is of concern is that even in pleasing children they will have failed them utterly. Their books are bad because the world has been left out of them. So has an intuition about life that once informed all our greatest children's books and most of the lesser ones as well, an intuition unknown to children's writers content to busy themselves with the details and worries of childhood itself. It is indefinable but there is no mistaking it, once heard. It is as detectable in the slightest picture book as in the longest epic—a naive longing in the author's voice, an acceptance that one cannot embrace the world without fearing its kick, and at the same time a celebration of curiosity and bravery. This is behind every great children's book from the tales of the Brothers Grimm to *Pinocchio*, from the verses of Mother Goose and Edward Lear to Wanda Gag's *Millions of Cats* and Carl Sandburg's *Rootabaga Stories*. G.K. Chesterton caught its spirit when in praising fairy tales he wrote, "Life is not only a pleasure but a kind of eccentric privilege." That is the voice of the comic spirit talking, and it is a voice both missing and sorely missed.

**H**OW HAS SO MUCH that is bad for literature and children been allowed to eat away at what ought to be—whether high, humble, or vulgar in origin—at the very least honest work honestly arrived at? Failures of nerve and the imperatives of profit aside, much of the hanky-panky (tinkering with classics, the attendance on special-interest groups) can be attributed to ordinary lapses in taste and good sense. Much more can be laid to the work of nepotism, cronyism, and the energies of not a few people without modesty or shame, despite their public resemblance to your favorite aunt. Here, for example, can be lumped the published efforts of those ethically suspect pains in every honest writer's billfold, the editors themselves. Gone are the days when a senior editor, feeling the need for a particular book, commissioned an author to write it. Now, assuming neither her daughter nor best pal needs a shot of glory at the moment, she will write it herself, appropriating a top illustrator and a goodly slice of the ad budget to do herself justice. One senior editor did recently do the honorable thing, submitting her manuscript elsewhere under a pseudonym; but here is an ethical standard a world apart from the realities of the children's-book industry.

Naturally, no one who lives in such a cozy niche of literature would for a moment entertain the following modest proposals:

1. *The pink slip for every other children's editor who is a woman.* There are too many women in children's books, and far too many holding down editorial positions. This imbalance of male and female sensibilities might have been accepted in 1919, when Macmillan put together the world's first juvenile department, and, under the delusion that children's books belonged to the ladies, gave it over to one; but there is no excuse for it today. There is no evidence that women understand more than men what children need and want; and, even if there were, it would hardly affect the verdict on books given us by several generations of women editors who have proven that, whatever their good intentions, their standards are timid and commercial.

2. *The termination of the picture book.* Even with superior examples offered at prices that would allow for home use, one cannot avoid suspicions that what is told in a picture book is



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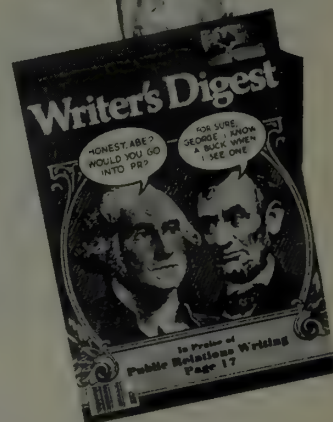
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## BOOKS

not worth a book for the telling, and that too many pictures, however good, may only divert the child away from any lasting encounter with his imagination. Worse, it is guilty of absolving parents of having to read—really read—to their children. The idea that children can learn to read words by first learning to read pictures is so bizarre one wonders if the educators responsible for it have got their heads screwed on straight. No one, children least of all, can get the feel of a language from nothing, nor from a few sentences. They must hear the sounds of whole books. Language is more than pretty captions; it is the rhythms of action and ideas, of expectation and consequence. It is the ultimate music. To abandon the verbal at an early age is to abandon the child.

3. *The promotion of the storybook.* Not to be confused with the picture book, the storybook is longer, livelier, and usually more complex. Books in the tradition of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *Millions of Cats*, *The Story of Babar*, and Maurice Sendak's *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* are, together with the children's novel (see below), the best hope for reaffirming Chesterton's eccentric privilege of life and for redeeming children's books from commercialism and banality.

4. *The termination of teen-age fiction.* No one has ever satisfactorily explained why there is or ought to be such a thing as teen-age fiction at all. In the case of science fiction and fantasy, for example, there is little being written for adults that could not be understood by any literate twelve-year-old. Conversely, some prizewinning fantasies for teen-agers have a turgidity of style the worst SF hack would be hard put to achieve. As for all that novelized stuff about alienation, drugs, and pregnancy, the great bulk of it might be more enjoyable presented in comic books. There are any number of very good underground cartoonists on the West Coast who need the money and might be willing to make something halfway real of such material.

5. *The rediscovery of the children's novel.* This is a form not much practiced by American writers, perhaps because of all books for children it is the hardest to do well, and perhaps too because by the time a writer has acquired the necessary skills he may be too corrupted or too dispirited either to make the attempt or to keep from botching the job. In this henpecked

world, no one speaks the unspeakable that, with the exception of Beatrix Potter, every great children's novel was written by a man, and nearly all of them by a man with little or no professional interest in children or their literature: Perrault, the Grimms, Andersen, Lear, Carroll, MacDonald, Stevenson, Twain, Collodi, Kipling, Graham Milne. (Carl Sandburg's *Rootabag Stories* and more recent books by E. I. White, Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and I. B. Singer seem to make it axiomatic that any remarkable children's book of the category will be the work of a gifted male "amateur.") It is instructive to note that while the Grimms, Andersen, Lear, and Carroll were doing their work, the ladies, self-appointed protectors of every one, were busy as bees edifying children with religious tracts and moral instructions. They have been at it ever since.

6. *The termination of the Newbery, Caldecott awards.* Each year for fifty-three and thirty-seven years respectively, the Newbery and Caldecott Medals have been awarded by the American Library Association to "the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children" and to "the most distinguished American picture book." That's ninety distinguished books in all, and a taste of dust in the mouth. The average N/C book is just another average book—often decently done, always terribly earnest, always ordinary. The best Newbery books, such as *The Slave Dancer*, by Paula Fox, glide along on good ideas that never wake up even the sympathetic reader. Most are haunted by the genteel ghost of that winner who announced she had never done anything to make her mother ashamed. Even less can be said for the prints and posters which have dominated the Caldecott awards for the past thirty years.

Everyone has a right to his style and his prize, of course. Were it not for the pernicious effects of the N/C awards, they would hardly matter. But mediocrity tends to gather glory these days, and everywhere the N/C books are set up as little idols of sensibility and style by teachers and librarians dedicated to the cultural uplift of kids who just might be on their way to some larger literacy than is encouraged by such books.

7. *The removal of writers, poets, and illustrators from the schools and libraries.* They mean to spur the imagination of the child, but all they do,



suspect, is make the world a little more banal. Artists cannot enter the classroom without the emphasis shifting, however subtly, from art to celebrity. I do not care, as a reader, and I do not think most children, unaided, care how or why or by whom a book is made. That they are asked to know as much as they are can only debase the mystery of what is in a particular book, and the mystery of all books as magical things.

8. *The termination of undergraduate college courses in children's literature.* These courses are doing literature and generations of children more harm than good by following the texts now standard in the field—chronologies, most of them, and appreciations of librarians, editors, booksellers, and other good souls who were legends in their time—the sort of uncritical histories in which nosegays are thrown toward Pyle's mother for raising such a nice boy, and Margaret Wise Brown, author of *The Runaway Bunny*, is elevated to the rank of genius. Children's book scholars can't help but write these clubhouse surveys, of course, because there is not a lot you can say about most children's books (they resist explication in a way adult literature does not), and because the usual scholar does not often have the perception to cut through the wisdoms that pass for critical thought in the enchanted world of children's literature. Laboring for more than two minutes on, say, *The Wind in the Willows*, he will likely tell you that what she everes about the book—what sets it apart for her as a work of literature and raises it to the level of the sublime—is the chapter "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn," that intrusive prelude to Kahlil Gibran in which Rat and Mole hear the unearthly pipes of Pan and fall to their knees in teary reverence. C.S. Lewis was quite right that the child who has met the creatures of *The Wind in the Willows* "has ever afterwards, in its bones, a knowledge of humanity . . . which it could not get in any other way"; but the child encouraged to swallow the pseudoclassical pantheism of Grahame's piper runs the risk of growing up soft at the core and of wearing fads for a soul. Such rambles with the muse are nice for American college students, however, who seem at last to have found, in children's literature, the universal cut course.

9. *The hiring of a few fast guns; or,*

*a good critic is hard to find.* Despite the high regard in which our several trade journals are held, professional reviewing of children's books in America is depressingly second rate. Only a handful of outsiders—Jean Stafford in *The New Yorker* for example, or the collectively disgruntled voice of the *New York Times*—have anything worthwhile to say on the subject, and they, because they operate sporadically and from without the field, can be discounted as having much effect on sales, let alone on the way we think about our children's books.

How we do, and at the same time, do not, think about our children's books, is best reflected by that infuriating form of benign neglect, the roundup review. In varying degrees the roundup rules the shape of each of the journals on whose brief opinions the fortunes of every new book must ride: *School Library Journal*, the American Library Association's *Booklist*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and, to a lesser extent, *The Horn Book*. With a nice feel for democracy in action, a list of books for review is gotten up, a paragraph of a certain length is allotted to each book, and pretty near equal space is shown to all. Week after week, year after year, mountains of these paragraphs heap up, and few are willing to sort them out. The industry which knows no law but the momentum of its own survival rolls on like a great conveyor belt, and the journals have their pages full just maintaining a spot check on the titles.

In this way children's journals and reviewers inadvertently become what Eliot Fremont-Smith has called shills for the industry because, accepting not the performance but the *occasion* of each book as equal to that of all others, they allow themselves to be made into list-makers. No idea of quality is put forward; none is recalled and none demanded.

The visible results of such a leveling of literature will be evident to anyone who has ever come up against the fact of what retailers and librarians do and do not carry on their shelves as a consequence of the reviews they read. Among bookstores only a Scribner's or an Eeyore's in New York or a small-town gem like the Andover Bookstore in Massachusetts is likely to salt its stock with anything worthwhile. For the rest, relying heavily on *PW*'s roundups of winsome and commercial choices, it's the same old story: bad

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but noticeable books by name authors, didactic tracts, domestic candy, calendars, and the like. What is depressing is not that the stores carry such books, but that they carry them to the exclusion of too much else that is as good and better. A parent in an above-average store with a selection of perhaps 300 children's titles—say, one in a college town supplying a course in children's literature, to go to upstate New York for an example—ought reasonably to expect to find among the current crop of titles at least a few of the highest quality. What he will find, typically, is a fat sampling of the domestic dross mentioned earlier in this article. He will not find *Lizard Music* (Manus Pinkwater), *Moon Whales* (Ted Hughes/Leonard Baskin), *Nightmares* (Jack Prelutsky/Arnold Lobel), *The Red Swan* (John Bierhorst), or any number of other promising new books. He will find no books at all, from this or any other season, by Tove Jansson, William Steig, Natalie Babbitt, Nancy Elkholtz Burkert, M.B. Goffstein, William Kurelek, Margot Zemach, Edward Gorey, or Uri Shulevitz. He will find one entire shelf devoted to the once-amusing and now repetitive books of James Marshall, and another to wordless picture books and miniature boxed sets. Wordless books—most of them idiot cartoons about sneezing, running, falling down—are a bastard genre, but they sell like bubble gum. Boxed sets derive from no compelling cause beyond the desire to be cute and make money. Having borrowed every one of Maurice Sendak's turns of style, the hacks must now rip off his *Nutshell Library* as well—in two instances without even doing him the courtesy of calling their junk by another name. But that's business.

**G**IVEN HALF A CHANCE, children will often choose to read, or be read, much humbler fare than the best we can offer them, and they will be moved in strange, unknowable ways by it. They will always want comic books, for example, which they love because comic books are theirs, not ours. Unless we can claim to know what we are doing—and I suspect when it comes to children none of us can—they may be better off with their own choices, insofar as their freedom to choose anything may kindle a love of reading. In my

own childhood, before I took up with such pleasing stuff as Donald Duck and D.C. Comics, the humbler fare was *Old Mother West Wind* and *Uncle Wiggily*, good stories too easily despised today, appearing in none of our many so-called studies of children's books, save in passing—a misplaced snobbery and a shame. Thornton Burgess and Harrison Cady were hardly Joel Chandler Harris or Beatrix Potter; nonetheless, they created an inexhaustible landscape in their nature tales of the Green Meadows and Dear Old Briar Patch and deserve to be remembered for honest and often magical stories. Howard Garis and Lang Campbell gave us in the *Uncle Wiggily* stories the Skeezicks and his rowdy gang, among the looniest of all nursery villains. Where is there anything like these today? Where is the generosity of effort?

The following sixteen titles, representing less than one-tenth of 1 percent of all those published in the past decade or so, seem to me to be among the best that have been done in that period, aside from the books of Maurice Sendak and the excellent work of Tomi Ungerer, whose talents are better viewed overall than in any one title:

1. *All the Way Home*, by Lore Segal. Illustrated by James Marshall. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. One of the funniest picture books in years, told and illustrated with classical precision.

2. *The Animal Family*, by Randall Jarrell. Decorations by Maurice Sendak. Pantheon. A love story inspiring complete belief in a realm previously known only through the tales of George MacDonald.

3. *The Bear Who Had No Place to Go*, by James Stevenson. Harper & Row. This writer's favorite. Ralph, the bicycling bear, pedals through a series of comic adventures that are gently haunted by sorrow until he finds his rightful place in the sun.

4. *Everything About Easter Rabbits*, by Wiltrud Roser. Translated by Eva L. Mayer. Crowell. *Father Christmas*, by Raymond Briggs. Coward, McCann and Geoghegan. The two best holiday books for children in decades.

5. *Father Fox's Pennyrhymes*, by Clyde Watson. Illustrated by Wendy Watson. Crowell. *Frog and Toad Are Friends*, by Arnold Lobel. Harper & Row. *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, by William Steig. Windmill. *Mother Goose in Vermont*, two nifty amphibians,

and a donkey on the spot, having in common a greatly deserved popularity.

6. *A Little Schubert*, by M.B. Goffstein. Record by Peter Schaaf. Harper & Row. A droll biography of anyone's humanity by the mistress of picture book precision, and a nice corrective to today's image of the artist as celebrity.

7. *Lumberjack*, by William Kurelek. Houghton Mifflin. Hard to imagine a boy not getting up an absolute lust for the deep woods with this book. The again, in the age of the Evel Knievel doll, maybe not.

8. *Snow White*. Translated by Randall Jarrell. Illustrated by Nancy Elkholtz Burkert. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Forget Bruno Bettelheim's proscription against the illustrated fairy tale for the sake of this book whose pictures are too beautiful and too thoughtful to be missed.

9. *Tuck Everlasting*, by Natalie Babbitt. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Probably the best work of our best children's novelist—a quiet fable about immortality, with a stunning and perfectly underplayed finish.

10. *The Wedding Procession of the Rag Doll and the Broom Handle, and Who Was in It*, by Carl Sandburg. Illustrated by Harriet Pincus. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Of all the tales in Sandburg's *Rootabaga Stories*, the perfect choice for a picture book, with illustrations that are homely as the dickens, and all the more fascinating for it.

11. *How Tom Beat Captain Najor and His Hired Sportsmen*, by Russell Hoban. Illustrated by Quentin Blake. Atheneum. *The Shrinking of Treehorn*, by Florence Parry Heide. Illustrated by Edward Gorey. Holiday House. *The Slightly Irregular Fire Engine*, by Donald Barthelme. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Three books that may prove sophisticated or esoteric for some children, but which are well worth trying in spite of that—or because of it, depending on your point of view. In praise of sophistication, in fact, I would go so far as to recommend that you leave your own picture books lying about wherever your children can get at them—Brueghel, Goya, Edward Gorey's *Amphigorey*, the albums of Saul Steinberg, whatever. At the age of ten I had a run-in with the political drawings of Thomas Nast, and though I was filled with fear and loathing by the experience, I wouldn't trade it for all the Newbery books in Boston. □



# CONFUSING THE ENTRAELS

Jack Richardson

*Empire Without End*, by Lidia Mazzolani. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$10.95.

THE RISE OF Rome from a rough city-state to an empire that, in Gibbon's words, "comprehended the fairest part of earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind," and its subsequent decline, form an enticing historical story. Other empires have been geographically larger and more absolute in their dominion, but none has had a period of rule so clearly established, and none has had such a long-lasting effect on the laws and manners of the peoples it ruled.

The fact that Roman influence outside its military enforcement makes the study of its empire much more than a matter of boundary lines and dates, and has often led historians, touched in their own times by Rome's language, laws, and philosophy of government, to adopt a tone of institutional urgency in their efforts to learn, behind Rome's rise and fall, historical principles that will be of exemplary use to their own age.

Even today, when to be educated no longer requires a cultural acquaintance with Latin literature and history, Rome still maintains a firm place in the historical imagination. In bookstores one can always find at least a half-dozen popular studies of Roman history whose authors make it evident that, in between titillating accounts of carnivals and goings-on at the public baths, they are providing their readers with pertinent historical lessons. One can see the insidious beginnings of the welfare state in the practice of the *dole* and *alimenta*; another will find a Marxist's satisfaction in the erupting squabbles among social classes or in the evolution of the *Equites* to a decadent middle class whose traditions were based on nothing deeper than the most recent business coups; a third will remind us, after comparing football games with gladiatorial battles, that our age may assume too quickly its moral superiority. Even those who can't read, who know nothing of Rome except what they've seen in the movies, somehow sense in its history a warn-

ing to communities of the present. They may not know who Cato was, but like him they fear and dislike any softening of moral customs, and in their minds they infer from topless bars and military cutbacks the coming of Neroian orgies and barbarian invasions.

**A**N EXCEPTION to this trend toward using Rome's history to uncover portents and parallels is *Empire Without End*, by Lidia Mazzolani. It is a closely reasoned, scholarly work that focuses on the attitudes of Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus in their roles as historians and citizens of Rome. Through their conception of Rome's past and their judgments of men and events, Mazzolani traces a theme of apprehension about their nation's fate that begins with the class tensions in Sallust, continues through Livy's account of an empire justified by moral virtues and dependent on them, and, in the fierce, sharp judgments of Tacitus, swells into a dark conclusion about the nature of man and power, so that history becomes a tragic fate rather than a moral lesson.

Anyone interested in what the Romans thought about themselves and how they perceived their role in the world they gradually subdued, will recognize in *Empire Without End* an important addition to historical scholarship. However, it is also true that Mazzolani's work presupposes that the reader has already a broad, first-hand knowledge of the historians she writes about and the times in which they lived. Since this condition severely limits the book's potential audience, and since, as I've said, Mazzolani is too much of a scholar to indulge in facile comparisons of past and present, the publishers have apparently decided to tempt the nonspecialist with a lurid introduction by Mario Pei that exhorts Americans first to acquire a sense of history and then to reflect soberly on the similarities between their country and Rome.

This attempt to turn a piece of scholarship into a handbook for national survival would be no more than an amusing editorial gimmick if Pei's

introduction were not so offensive. I don't know what sort of reader he thinks he's addressing when he lectures Americans on their ignorance of geography ("How many Canadian provinces can he name and locate?"), or quizzes them on history ("What are the modern names of the ancient Euxine Sea, the Pillars of Hercules, the Roman Province of Armorica?"), but it is certainly not the same reader Mazzolani addresses with such respect in her investigation of historical nuance, nor is it likely to be one who is comforted by such reassurance as Pei offers in his next rhetorical question: "To the natural and obvious query 'Are we of modern America destined to undergo a fate similar to that which befell the Roman Empire?' my answer is: 'Not necessarily.'" After such a grand equivocation, it is no surprise that the rest of the introduction is spiced with historical parallels between America and Rome, and that almost all of them, after serving as admonishments to American policies, will be so burdened with qualifications as to render them historically meaningless. Sometimes Pei does not even bother to pretend that there is any significant connection between the events he juxtaposes, as when he uses the Jugurthine War to deliver an unflattering analysis of America's involvement in Vietnam.

Such tendentious use of history leads Pei inevitably into crude and simplistic judgments. In noting the difference between America after World War II and Rome after the Punic Wars, he explains America's reluctance to press its advantage against Russia, as opposed to the Roman policy regarding Carthage, as follows: "We must place the credit for this to the difference between the ruthless realism of the Romans and the visionary idealism of the Americans." To use "ruthless realism" to describe Roman society, especially in presenting a book whose theme is the agonizing tension throughout Roman history between its memory of virtue and its dreams of power, is a traducement of the very qualities Pei purports to admire in the work he introduces to us. □

Jack Richardson is the drama critic of Commentary.





## WAR CRIMES

A review of Marcel Ophuls's documentary *The Memory of Justice*

by Terrence Des Pres

**M**ARCEL OPHULS, the French filmmaker and son of Max Ophuls, has taken the documentary and turned it to original use. His last three films have focused on events of major historical import; but in each case Ophuls has been less concerned with the event itself than with its impact upon the private lives of the men and women involved. *The Sorrow and the Pity*, released in 1971, reconstructs the complicated agony of France under Nazi occupation. *A Sense of Loss*, made in 1972, records the cost of Ireland's civil war in terms of personal grief. These are strong accomplishments, but *The Memory of Justice*, released in the autumn of 1976, works on an even broader plane of ambition and scope. Starting with the trials of the Nazi elite at Nuremberg, *The Memory of Justice* examines the nature of war crimes, then and now; it seeks to understand the character of the perpetrators, then and now; and perhaps most unsettling, it insists upon probing German guilt in relation to the guilt of the victor nations, then and subsequently. Insofar as the film sets more recent atrocities within the context of Nuremberg, it encourages argument about its political "message." But insofar as its primary vehicle of connection between now and then is the memories of the many people Ophuls interviews, the film gives us testimony rather than argument, experience rather than political formulations, and if the film succeeds—and it does, despite the considerable risk it runs—its success has much to do with Ophuls's extraordinary skill as an interviewer.

At least in America, *The Sorrow and the Pity* received nothing but praise. But then, this earlier film stayed within the boundaries of France, and it worked almost entirely with the victims' points of view. *The Memory of Justice*, on the other hand, includes three wars and a dozen or more nations, and it works mainly with the victors' perspectives, the implication being that if the Nazis were evil, the rest of us—those with the power to defeat and judge—are not *therefore* good. Victory breeds its own sins, its own contradictions. Within the context of Nuremberg, for example, amnesty for recent draft resisters becomes an inevitable issue, since the argument for amnesty derives directly from the Nuremberg precedent. It is bitterly sad that the same country which, thirty years ago, condemned men for participating in an immoral war, should now condemn men for refusing to participate in an immoral war, or that the liberators of Dachau went on to set up free-fire zones.

This web of tragic contradiction is the material which gives *The Memory of Justice* its form, and Ophuls is relentless in his comparisons. Auschwitz, Dresden, My Lai—all are seen in relation to Nuremberg; and it has been precisely in this connection that controversy has arisen. It can be argued that the film minimizes the evil of the Hitler years, that it obscures the nihilistic nature of that war and undermines the uniqueness of the Holocaust by comparing these enormities with the

lesser atrocities of Algeria, Vietnam, Kent State, and so on. What happened at My Lai is not what happened at Auschwitz, even if the numbers of dead are left uncounted. To fail to clarify this fundamental difference of damage not only to truth, but, perhaps worse, to our future capacity for moral discernment.

Or one can take the opposite view: war crimes are war crimes and must be identified as such no matter on what scale or to what end they were perpetrated. Horror has followed horror up to the present moment, and to insist upon distinctions when the whole of mankind is threatened can only complicate solutions and increase the danger of a final holocaust. But what both of these interpretations overlook is the film's structure, its multiplicity of partial vision corresponding to the spectrum of possible response. *The Memory of Justice* is composed of testimony from so very many witnesses, each searching memory in order to speak for his or her truth (or his or her lie); it holds so many points of view firmly within the perspective of each other that no single interpretation can claim to be final.

By weaving together footage of Nazi and American atrocities, Ophuls does not imply a relation, a comparison. But he himself has said, to compare is to equate. On the contrary, comparison can function to dramatize distinction. And by making Nuremberg the principal event, a sort of absolute image against which other events can be recognized, measured, and judged, Ophuls implies that *this* event, for which the

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are being tried, is special, unique, central to everything else. Yet this uniqueness might end up entirely being a belief or comprehension (as is said of the death camps), were the incredible crimes of the Nazi regime not thus boldly placed *within* the rumormongering of realized evil. There is, in the film, an unavoidable dialectic at work: nothing is as final as we might wish, and within this shifting perspective the small, infinitely important drama of personal involvement and personal response replays itself in the faces of the men and women Ophuls interviews.

ALTHOUGH OPHULS USES conventional documentary footage from various archives, and although he implements basic material with newsreels, headlines, popular songs, and photographs, his principal resource is the interview, which he manages to conduct in such a way that the encounter between camera and witness becomes, both for the viewer and the person interviewed, a moment of striking revelation. Beginning with the camera's capacity to focus on the human face, the nature of film as a medium is remarkably suited to Ophuls's artistic needs. Through the technique of montage he can juxtapose different scenes, different interviews, different moments in time, and thereby reveal aspects of a given situation that might otherwise go unnoticed. Through the technique of crosscutting he can break long sequences into short segments which may then be inserted at strategic places in the film. These techniques allow for control of pace and momentum, and thereby give the film a basically spatial form (different scenes and places gathered around a central event) the character of narra-

tion. The manipulation of these effects is not a matter of preference. Everything depends on editing, on deciding which images will be juxtaposed at a certain point in the film. The film is thus "set up," as are the places and settings which Ophuls carefully selects for his interviews. This has led critics to question the "objectivity" of a supposedly objective form. But, of course, there is no such thing as "objectivity" in the human sense, if only because, to make a film at all, some perspective or point of view must be maintained. Ophuls certainly has his own view, but he con-

stantly counters it by juxtaposing contrary images and by interviewing people who hold conflicting beliefs. His art is thus based on the kind of spontaneity generated by tension and disjunction, even when—as his critics contend—particular sequences are obviously contrived.

But what about this contrivance? At one point we see Ophuls standing on a dock at the edge of a windswept lake, talking with an old man who holds a fishing rod in his hand. The man is admitting to Ophuls that he was a Nazi and that even now he will not be shamed by his past. As he talks, a fishhook dangles from his line, moving as the wind moves, a vaguely ugly, vaguely menacing object at the very center of the screen. And this scene, furthermore, is intercut briefly with another scene—the man's wife up by the house, listening to the interview, her face cold and crumpled with fear, her head unconsciously shaking slowly no, no, no. That is the whole of it, and in its simplicity it is enormously effective. Or again: while Ophuls interviews Lord Shawcross, prosecutor for the British at Nuremberg, Shawcross explains with a sort of academic detachment the correctness of bombing civilian populations. War is war and everyone must pay. As he speaks he sits in a luxurious leather chair next to a large fireplace in which flames flicker cheerfully. Intercut with this scene are brief shots of Shawcross's country home—a modest rural mansion impeccably kept (elsewhere in the film we see the ruins of Dresden and Hiroshima). All of this is "set up," to be sure. But these people agreed to speak in these settings (which are, after all, their actual circumstances of life), and they are openly stating their convictions.

Or take, finally, the way in which Ophuls penetrates the very different worlds of two men who died in Vietnam. He interviews Barbara Keating, a woman whose pride and pleasure in the fact that her husband died a War Hero is evident not only in her crisp words, not only in her expensive dress and finely styled hair, but also in her substantial suburban house, in the special cabinet where she displays her husband's war medals, and finally in the fact that Ophuls, throughout the interview, stands on the stairs with Mrs. Keating at some distance above him on the landing. By contrast (and these interviews are juxtaposed by much crosscutting), Louise and Robert

Ransom are deeply hurt and humbled by the death of their son; for them it was a meaningless sacrifice, as stupid as the medal from President Thieu which Mr. Ransom scorns. Their sorrow and antiwar sentiment are evident not only in their painfully hesitant words, but in their working-class clothes, their unselfconsciousness on camera, in the plain kitchen in which they are interviewed, and perhaps also by the fact that Ophuls has joined them around the table as they talk.

Contrived, yes; but Mrs. Keating was surely free to dress as she liked, to stand where she liked in her own home, and take a hard view of those who in her eyes failed their country by refusing to fight. In the same way, the Ransoms were free to dress, to sit or stand as they liked, to speak with bitterness about Vietnam; and their kitchen does indeed suggest a way of life that could ill afford their loss. The viewer might accept either argument as an argument for or against the war. But in both cases the argument is personalized by the kind of people being interviewed as well as by the character of their surroundings, so that finally the viewer makes his or her choice on the basis of human values (humility versus pride, care versus complacency) rather than abstract principles merely.

OPHULS IS AN artist of "second sight," a craftsman who creates through recollection after the fact. He is a man who believes that the more complex, contradictory, and many-voiced an issue becomes, the more likely it is to yield its residuum of truth. *The Memory of Justice* hinges on the fact that many of the nations which sat in judgment at Nuremberg had committed their own war crimes, and that the prosecutors themselves were not without fault. At the trials the Russians were in favor of mass execution—as usual. Lord Shawcross pronounces the bombing of Dresden a good thing. Edgar Faure, prosecutor for the French, admits to an admiration for Goering, and in an offhand moment remarks that, after all, no evidence was uncovered which could link Adolf Hitler directly to the death of a single concentration-camp victim. Telford Taylor, prosecutor for the United States, comes off somewhat better by insisting that no matter how shabby the effort, the principles of justice must be upheld. Unfortunately,



## OUR POEM

by Laura Fortenbaugh

We are a perfect length  
of line

We are a perfect  
weight

a perfect strength of line

Our perfect length is  
knotted and bound  
Our perfect weight  
is looped and coiled

We are rising to the sound of the flute.

We are heaved and cleated  
stretched over green water  
We climb, abdomen knotted  
hands fastened to fire we slide  
hands lashed behind us we dive

We are diving through the noose  
like dolphins.

We are woven on one loom  
unwound of one spool  
We are a twine of elm and ash  
made fast  
that wears but does not unravel

We are threaded through the eye.

## THREE POEMS

by Frederick Morgan

### AFTER SU SHIH

A whisper echoes  
from the cloud  
above a mountain that is not there.

### AFTER WEN CHENG-MING

At sunset the hills turn purple,  
the trees drip still from  
the afternoon rains.

One can sit alone in the long silence,  
sit quietly and sing.

Best of all is having nothing to do:  
let the world disperse itself!

A narrow path leads up and around—  
nearby, we know,  
is the home of an immortal.

### AFTER SHEN CHOU

White clouds, red leaves flying—  
I paddle home across the lake.  
Alighting on my bow,  
a crane perches,  
measures me with his golden eye.

## THE MOVIES

the force of his statement is weakened by that peculiar brand of easygoing righteousness, or let us call it indulgent generosity, which only victors can afford.

There is much in the film which undermines the authority of the judges at Nuremberg, not least a *March of Time* newsreel which gloats most crudely over the American capacity to bomb Dresden back to the Stone Age *twice*, once at night and once the next day. Nevertheless, Ophuls is working on a double level at this point, and working very carefully. He knows that Nuremberg established invaluable precedents: that, for example, conscience may have legitimate claims against the state; or that when those in command never kill, and those who kill are only following orders, then both are guilty. These are ethical advances of world importance, despite their constant violation. But Ophuls also knows that Nuremberg has become a cop-out. We prefer to see the trials as proof that good men win, that bad men get what they deserve, or that they do not (it comes to the same thing), but that in any case Nuremberg marked an end of vigilance and of the need to remember.

But if it was the end of the Third Reich, it most certainly cannot be taken as the end of our need to recognize and condemn inhuman actions. And thus Ophuls endeavors to change our awareness of Nuremberg, from a piece of history to an internalized image of our struggle for a clarity of moral vision which has not yet risen, and may never rise, to its conclusion. Above all he seeks to discredit the easy Nuremberg—the one in which Spencer Tracy and Marlene Dietrich exchange high talk and tragic looks. And this is why, finally, memories of Nazi, French, and American atrocities are made to collide in the film; not for the sake of comparison only, and still less to suggest that the Marines are *Einsatzgruppen* in disguise. Through the simple device of rapid juxtaposition, subsequent acts of inhumanity are now fixed within a frame of knowledge whose reference is Nuremberg, and Nuremberg itself assumes this kind of authority not because justice prevailed, but because *its* reference—absolute, intractable, timeless in enormity—is the horror of the death camps.

Midway through the film the following sequence occurs. A young woman, slender and nude, stands for a moment under a shower in a darkened room.

The scene shifts to a brightly light sauna, a closed room in which men and women, all nude and of different ages, discuss the moral problems of postwar Germany. One man remarks that in this place, stripped of clothes all are equal, all are the same. The conversation gets around to Nazi atrocities and someone starts to speak of gas but then stops in mid-sentence to phrase what he wishes to say. At this precise moment the camera moves forward to the fixtures on the ceiling. The scene shifts to another darkened room, this time with a swimming pool. The nude women come through the door and splash into the pool. That is all except, of course, that Ophuls has given us a parody of the death sequence at Auschwitz—the showers, the steaming room full of bodies, the throwing of the dead into pits.

Behind Nuremberg stands the Holocaust. In *The Memory of Justice* the real issue is so thoroughly present (especially in the minds of the Ophuls interviews) that the film contains less than a full minute of actual footage from the camps. No bulldozers shoving piles of bodies into pits. No ovens jammed with bones. All this is not necessary. Ophuls is working on a state of mind, a new kind of awareness created by the Holocaust made public at Nuremberg, in which consciousness—simply knowing what happened—becomes conscience. So, as Spenghauer, in his treatise on moral education, said that conscience is man's knowledge of what he has done, and that is exactly the point. Marcel Ophuls seriously intends to recreate the conscience of our race.

In an age of atrocity, Nuremberg comes the sounding board for what we *know*. That is why the French deserters went over to the Algerian side; in French uniform, he says, he felt like an SS man. That is why young G.I.s refused to kill in Vietnam; and that is why the picture of those bodies in the ditch at My Lai hits us with the shock of horrid recognition. And that is finally, is why the face of Albert Speer through all his lengthy interviews yields no expression. He too knows all of us know, that after Nuremberg there is really nothing more to say or learn, but only a memory to preserve. For Speer it is the memory of a guilt too great for atonement. For Ophuls it is the memory of our common struggle to see that the will to judge justice survives.



## THE FIRST AVENUE SCHOOL

Form, for once, follows function

by Nathan Silver

**T**HE IDEA THAT one would be willing to work even without pay, it occurs to me, is a fair way to understand the creativity any worker feels he contributes to his job. A view of this self-distinction is gained for example in the musical *A Chorus Line*, in which a performer says it's not just a job, she'd do it for love. Obviously a physician, carpenter, or even parole officer could make the same claim if he felt like it. But is architecture "not just a job"? Could architects "do it for love"? The answer is both is and isn't, and like other workers who need to eat, most architects wouldn't or couldn't. Yet many probably still feel that romantic about their efforts, even today—long after the Beaux Arts period of virtuoso design, way past the Twenties notions from Benedetto Croce of art as intuition and expression, and beyond the years when the modern movement itself was received and transmitted by devoted and confident acolytes.

As a group, contemporary American architects probably have more of a remaining sense of this creative dimension in their work than architects elsewhere—more of a feeling that they're not mere technicians, that they can deploy creative powers. This can be judged by considering merely external factors such as their individualistic and relatively enlightened clientele; the relatively tolerant planning restrictions—though not building codes—they must face; their own architectural training, which at least until recently put most weight on intuition, boldness, and artistic self-insurance; and, finally, the architecture critics, professional and amateur, who encourage architects to consider a building a performance or a game.

Nathan Silver, an American architect practicing in England, is the author of *Lost New York* and the coauthor of *Adhocism*.



Part of it is a performance, but performing is becoming a larger and larger part of architecture, and I'm not so sure that's good.

The best case to consider is Manhattan's latest office building of high design pretensions. There we can see stylistic development played out in the open—something like the next dealt card at a blackjack table surrounded by a kibitzing crowd. This seems to me very like the context in which Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo & Associates considered their office-hotel building for the U.N. Development Corporation at Forty-fourth Street and First Avenue. Thirty-nine stories high and only a few feet shorter than the U.N. Secretariat building diagonally opposite, the top thirteen stories of the building are a luxury hotel, and the lower stories, offices. There are a garage, a couple of banks, a hotel lobby, restaurants, and a coffee shop on or near the ground floor; a swimming pool is on the twenty-seventh floor, and a tennis court on the thirty-eighth. At One United Nations Plaza, as it's known (many new New York buildings have called themselves One So-and-so Plaza since the 1961 zoning law rewarded the creation of even pointless and scarcely visible "plazas"), one sees immediately that these practical ingredients are not what the building is about as far as its creators and the kibitzing audience are concerned. As another up-front New York office building, it is the perfect object for vague aesthetic discussion about architecture with all socially responsible or even utilitarian questions left out. Like a blackjack player, the building seeks to beat the competition by going further and risking more. In order to be receptive to One United Nations Plaza, therefore, or to be even mildly enthusiastic, as a number of architecture journalists have been, one needs to appraise its game or performance



rather than how well it satisfies its requirements, because satisfying requirements is boring and possibly even sordid.

**D**ISGUIISING BALDNESS, bleakness, and pain is the sophistication we expect of worthy social design (armies kill, but they dress well and drill nicely); boring buildings do what they can to be interesting, and in office buildings interest often can be only skin deep. We shouldn't be ungrateful for what is interesting. Mies van der Rohe is reported to have said, "I don't want to be interesting, I want to be good." But even his Seagram Building is worthy more for its interest than its goodness (*most* buildings after all are good, in the sense that they "work"), and so is One United Nations Plaza. Its external walls are the main interest.

Perhaps the architects remembered Steinberg cartoons of buildings made from graph paper and thought, there is a realism here, we ought to do this—to design the most flat, repetitious, scaleless (four layers of grid per floor level confuse the eye), paperlike (the

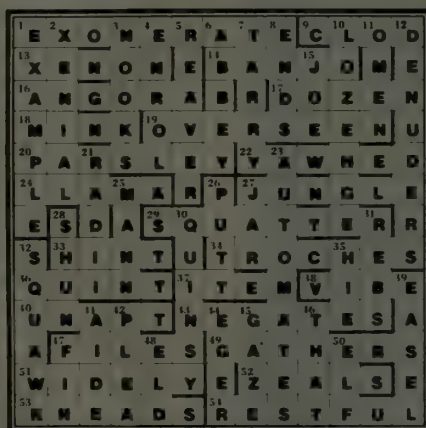
colored and partly silvered glass appears opaque) skin yet. What saves the building from being beneath consideration is that its designers see themselves as artists, not idea men, so their intentions are beyond the merely anecdotal. This is revealed in other interesting aspects. The glass and metal wall is folded like paper, forming a few angular prisms horizontally and vertically on the exterior and making it geometrically different from anything nearby in the cityscape. On the other hand, in color and size and in the strength of its external planes the building seems clearly and overtly designed to refer to the U.N. Secretariat slab across the street (and, of course, neighboring buildings provide a true indication of the missing floor heights). The main U.N. block seems the comparison chosen by the architects for the building to make its stylistic case: the Secretariat, begun in 1949, enhances the youth of One United Nations Plaza, as well as its own age—a symbiosis of flatteries. Very nice.

Looking further, one finds an authoritative air about the detail of the ground-floor entrances with their glass canopies, the design of the hotel lobby,

and especially that of the restaurant and bar. Use of large simple expanses of a single color, plain middle green, is reminiscent of work done recently by a few other architects (such as Norman Foster in a project built in Ipswich, England), but I don't think such stealing is unwholesome—it reveals only a practical sensibility, self-assured about working within contemporary style, and one aware that aesthetic logic calls for affirming the best already in existence, or at most doing the next cogent thing. To show that creativity lives, the architects have provided the impressive novelty of a prism form of pseudo-greenhouse glazing backed by mirrors that dazzle with the sparkle of hundreds of reflected lights, and has reflected planes deep in the ceiling which flicker with bits of diners and waiters in motion.

It's all surface, but deep surface. In a culture which produces dross by the carload, a bit of honest tinsel is worth something. It seems to me less important whether great architecture abides in such buildings than that reasonable architecture should survive somewhere. With every city getting the architecture it deserves, urban design ranges from the city where overdesign doesn't exist and each building is built by its inhabitants in the traditional fashion (an admirable but unattainable state) to the case of New York City, where every new building, art gallery, boutique, and shopfront attracts and excites attention for its novelty value, and ultimately nothing is more significant on a busy Manhattan street than a man changing a tire. It hasn't happened yet, but we need to look out.

On the other hand, it remains true that a more refined modern culture is hard to locate. It may be a myth. Helsinki isn't all Aalto buildings. In England the contemporary physical realm reveals less dross, but also less art, and I'm not sure that's better. Among my English architect friends I can think of perhaps only one or two who would declare a willingness to be architects without pay, if that's a valid barometer. Buildings like One United Nations Plaza are what remain of architecture as a great outlet for virtuoso expression. In a cosmic sense, perhaps they are a little undignified, slightly ridiculous, or even crass, but they may also serve as bookmarks in case the great book is opened again.

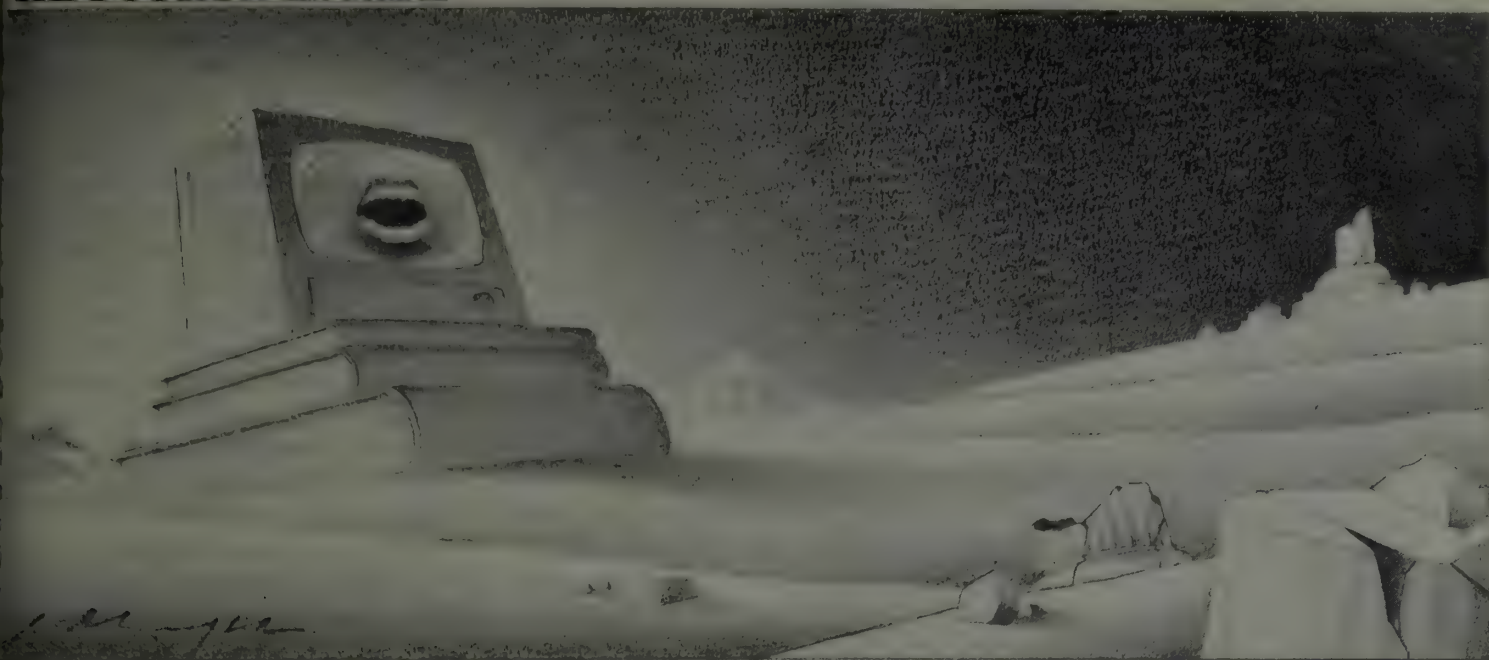


## Solution to the December Puzzle

### Notes for "Alphabet Soup"

Across: 1. XERONATE (hidden); 9. (G)OLD; 13. NEON (anagram); 14. JOAN (anjo[lu], anagram); 16. GROAN (anagram); 17. Z-ONE; 18. KIN(d); 19. VENEERS (anagram); 20. RELAYS (anagram); 22. W(AN)ED; 24. ALMA (hidden); 27. LUN(G)E; 29. QUART-ET; 33. TIN; 34. C.-HORES; 36. UNIT (you knit); 37. ME-T; 38. BE-I; 40. PANT(her); 43. E.G.-ESTA; 47. IS-LE(reversal); 49. HATERS (anagram); 51. MUELD; 52. SEA-L.; 53. DEANS (hidden); 54. FLU-TEST(reversal). Down: 1. EX-AMPLE; 2. X-LAINE(reversal); 3. O.K. in SON(reversal); 4. ENROL (anagram); 5. Re-AYER; 6. EBB(reversal) in AY; 7. TAR-RY (two meanings); 8. (r)ENDS; 10. LO(ZEN)GE; 11. O(ME)N; 12. DENUDEFS (anagram); 15. JOE (initials); 21. D.A.R.(reversal)-I-I; 23. AUTO-MATES; 25. MAN-N.; 26. PUT-T.; 27. JAR(reversal); 28. SHUN (hidden); 30. QUIN(I)S-Y.; 31. REF(USE)S; 32. SQUAW-K.; 35. HIE (sounds like HII!); 39. E(AS)EL; 41. (m)AIDE(n); 42. PLEA; 44. EGER (hidden); 45. GAZE (gays); 46. T(he)-IAT; 47. FIN (two meanings); 48. (h)ELD; 50. (s)ELI.





John Cayea

## A MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

The economics of the First Amendment

by Kevin Phillips

**A**NCIENT SPARTA was a military state. John Calvin's Geneva was a religious state. Mid-nineteenth-century England was Europe's first industrial state, and the contemporary United States is the world's first media state.

No, this isn't another attempt to blame the woes of the world on a secret cabal of Manhattan journalists. American economic and social change is brought about by the various means of communicating information and ideas—not just the words of communicators, but the paper flow of bureaucrats, the unbelievable new information systems of minicomputer technology, the voluminous output of scientists and social scientists, the influence of law and public regulation, the shapes and sounds of art.

A neo-Marxian conservative, as *National Review* once thought to libel me, might offer this explanation. As of the 1970s, 30 to 40 percent of the U.S. gross national product is accounted for by the production, consumption, and dissemination of knowledge. Not alfalfa, calico, rolling stock, or petroleum products—*knowledge*. The media question may be government memos, school instruction, newspapers, televi-

sion, foundation studies, legal briefs, computers, scientific evaluations, phonograph records, rock concerts, movies, paintings, statistical analyses, or architects' blueprints. Collectively, they have created a revolution as profound as the mid-nineteenth-century upheaval when manufacturing—now increasingly subordinated by the knowledge economy—moved ahead of agriculture.

Wait a minute, you say. Most members of the U.S. knowledge community, being middle-class or upper-middle-class, deny that they belong to a new elite, waving their overdrawn bank statements to prove that no new caste has emerged to match the industrial-era Rockefellers, Carnegies, et al. Perhaps. But let's look beyond periodic lamentations over the meager earnings of artists, teachers, and poets.

It's not necessary to demonstrate that teachers and bureaucrats now earn salaries *above* the national average. They do, and an increasingly well-paid bureaucracy is a characteristic of the media state, but the larger economic dimension of change is even more com-

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elling. Consider two artists in very different circumstances—Pablo Picasso and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The latter, working before the industrial revolution, hopped from petty ducal court to petty princely court, churning out four or five compositions a month for barely enough money to get by on. If it's Tuesday, this must be Saxony-Anhalt. Picasso, on the other hand, was lucky enough to survive into the media era. After the blue and pink periods of his younger days, Picasso died in a green period. His estate, swollen by the value of 800 of his own pictures, came to almost \$1 billion. In one study of Picasso, the English critic John Berger noted that after World War II, Picasso bought a house in the South of France merely by turning out a still life. "Whatever he wishes to own," Berger observed, "he can acquire by drawing it."

To paraphrase Marshall McLuhan, the media are increasingly the money. Picasso's situation is unusual, but not a fluke. From record sales and box-office receipts, a pop star like Elton John grosses about \$50 million a year. With the sale of movie rights, a best-selling author like Peter Benchley can make \$10 million to \$20 million out of



a book like *Jaws*. Famous musicians and conductors are getting rich from record royalties. Well-known journalists increasingly constitute a financial as well as intellectual elite. Great crises can be grist for media conglomerate profits—Watergate was worth millions to the Washington Post Company. And in the bull market of the 1960s, the knowledge revolution was strongly affecting corporate finance. Half of the hot new stocks on Wall Street had such prefixes as data-, tele-, techni-, or compu-.

What's more, a parallel trend is taking shape in political finance. In the 1976 Presidential race, for example, corporate money was largely squeezed out. In contrast, the power of the new knowledge-economy organizations is increasing. The National Education Association and other fast-growing public-employee unions are wielding unprecedented dollars and clout. In Ohio, one unhappy local candidate went so far as to argue—and his theme deserves attention—that media endorsements are so powerful and important as to amount to a corporate contribution. And with individual fat cats limited in what they can contribute to a candidate, rock stars are becoming the new kingmakers—they can stage a concert, and raise \$100,000 in small contributions for a politician in a single night. Back in November 1975, Phil Walden of Capricorn Records arranged a concert for Jimmy Carter that staffers admit saved the Georgian's campaign. Without those proceeds, Carter might have had to quit. Now the artist Jamie Wyeth is developing a new angle—painting a picture to serve as a door prize for a fund-raising event. Apparently, this also slips through a campaign law aimed at older forms of monied power.

The fact is that older forms of monied power are losing ground. Gone are the days when great landlords or aristocrats were the nation's major political patrons. Timber interests, railroads, and power companies no longer call many political shots except in a few small Western states. DuPont is losing Delaware. Wise politicians now look for patronage from the knowledge institutions—news media, universities, research institutions, and foundations. Consider the post-officeholding vocations of such conservatives as Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, Ronald Reagan, and James Schlesinger: they're commentators, authors, foundation orga-

nizers, and think-tank officials. Before long, we'll be adding would-be columnist Henry Kissinger to the list.

American law is changing, too, shifting as it always has to reflect major realignments of economic power. Take, for example, the recent flurry of propaganda about the public's "right to know" coupled with media invocation of a First Amendment "free press" spirit going back to the Founding Fathers. In reality, though, it's difficult to invoke Thomas Jefferson or James Madison on behalf of the new legal rights claimed by the knowledge industry, because judicial interpretation of the First Amendment is only a matter of the last half-century. Today's media power would have been absolutely unrecognizable to the architects of the Constitution. And the situation is getting worse. Like past emerging economic concentrations, the communications industry is busily trying to expand a segment of the Bill of Rights (in this case, the First Amendment) to fight off regulation. To some scholars, the news media have become "the last stronghold of laissez-faire," and justly so. The public interest has virtually no legal status or access.

**A**NGLO-AMERICAN LAW has always accorded privileges to power. Centuries ago, "benefit of clergy" summed up the special legal status (and privilege) of churchmen. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the wealthy enjoyed manifest legal privileges, from multiple enfranchisement to exemption from military conscription. As middle-class power grew, increasingly firm legal privilege surrounded the relationship of doctor and patient and that of lawyer and client. Now, as a result of the knowledge revolution, we are seeing the emergence of a *new* privileged class. In recent years, journalists have pretty well completed the legal fortifications around their right to refuse to divulge confidential sources. And a case in a California federal court last spring extended a kindred privilege to professors and researchers. In his unprecedented opinion, U.S. District Court Judge Charles B. Renfrew ruled:

*Society has a profound interest in the research of its scholars, work which has a unique potential to facilitate change through knowledge... Compelled disclosure of*

*confidential information would without question severely stifle research into questions of public policy, the very subject in which the public interest is greatest.*

From all these perspectives, the knowledge revolution and the emergence of "the media" (in the broad sense) has caused a major upheaval in U.S. society. Places like the East Side of Manhattan and Back Bay in Boston, once the conservative residential strongholds of a conservative economic elite, are now the liberal strongholds of a liberal economic elite. Steel executives, railroaders, and cocoa brokers have been displaced by foundation executives, urban planners, and communications specialists. From Palo Alto to Princeton, scores of university towns have likewise changed their socioeconomic stripes.

As for the direct political impact of the news media, that hardly needs comment after the disturbing media-oriented nature of the 1976 Presidential campaign. Allegations of liberal ideological bias have been supplemented (or even superseded) by explanations of how the news media operate to trivialize debate. Media events have themselves emerged as the most important events of a national campaign. Meanwhile the withering of the political parties has become increasingly apparent, and why not? After all, mass parties as we have known them were creatures of the early nineteenth-century industrial era and there is no reason why they should serve a continuing role in the knowledge-revolution era, what with the information, mobilization, and welfare functions of the old party system so greatly usurped by the communication media and government bureaucracy.

After attending an Aspen Institute Berlin conference this September in which American, British, and German participants discussed many of these points with little agreement, it seems to me that only we Americans are far enough into the sociopolitical upheaval of the knowledge revolution to really appreciate its consequences. I have used the term *mediacracy* to try to describe the change, but this word seems to run afoul of objections to its Agnewesque implications of a coterie of manipulators.

That's too bad, because there is an increasingly important media aristocracy in the United States, and the national news media do serve as a dissemination system and linchpin of sorts.



the views of the so-called Eastern establishment of think tanks, councils, universities, foundations, and kindred institutions. But, unfortunately, one is an overall reluctance to discuss the emerging new set of vested interests such. In this respect, of course, the major media and their allies differ very little from previous economic power elites. They deplore analysis and arguments that seek to strip away their philosophic mystique and present their self-interest, just as the Goliaths of American manufacturing disliked the arguments of Oliver Wendell Holmes and Charles Beard, men who sought to show the way in which American law reflected and evolved with economic interest. Today, "free press" is often as unthinking an industry war as "free enterprise" was in the long-ago days of constitutional furor over basic state economic regulation. Back in the days when the Morgans, Rockefeller, and Carnegies were trying to portray their assorted trusts, holding companies, and watered-stock pyramids as living embodiments of the philosophy of the Founding Fathers, they did not shut off press discussion. They wanted that the giants of business controlled a fair amount of the press (and owed a good bit more), there were still muckrakers ready and able to challenge them. It may be harder to challenge the knowledge-revolution now, since the best-known muckrakers are themselves part and parcel of that interest group. After all, if we had to let for the oil industry to open the pages of petroleum corporate journals to critical analysis of the depletion allowance, it would have been a long time. And because the vast national network of communications no longer admits much competitive new entry into the mass-media marketplace, any debate will have to occur largely in the existing context.

Unfortunately, and without suggesting that "the media" are a monolith, there is something dangerous in the unprecedented situation where an increasingly dominant economic interest group controls the means of its own destiny. Yet that is substantially the situation today. If, as seems likely, the knowledge revolution is to be as powerful a force as the industrial revolution, and the rise of capitalism before we could do with a good bit more serious inquiry and a good bit less knowledge-industry protectiveness and Amendment breast-beating. ☐



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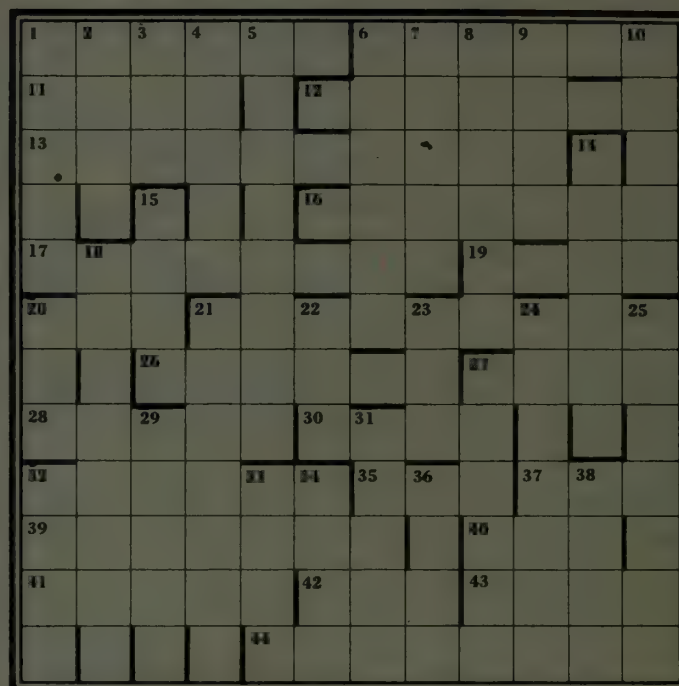
## NEW DIRECTIONS

by Richard Maltby, Jr. (with acknowledgments to Log of *The Listener*)

**This month's instructions:** The letters N, S, E, and W and the pairs NE, SE, SW, and NW are to be represented in the diagram by arrows suitably oriented, North lying at the top of the puzzle for Across answers and at the right for Down answers. Thus:

represents SEWS and WISE Across and NETS and ESNE Down. Answers include four proper names. 3D is somewhat uncommon; 24D is a variant spelling. Numbers in parentheses indicate the length of the answer, which may not be the same as the number of spaces in the diagram. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 92.



### CLUES

#### ACROSS

1. Dropped down, hurried around court (7)
6. Public buildings employ mothers on the exterior (7)
11. Church places Latin in forefront for making minor moral errors (5)
12. File to associate with being genealogically direct (8)
13. Hearing, subsequently fighting, English—that's a crock (11)
16. I'm in favor of fermented rice in desert (7)
17. Where shells are cleaned? (8)
19. A party for Millard Fillmore? Sounds like it could go to your head! (4)
20. Divide minus 5/6 to first digit (3)
21. They write checks wrong perhaps and ruin its dreams (9)
26. Use no university prize away from land (7)
27. Carry small drink easily, but only initially (4)
28. Stake holding Queen Elizabeth's head covering (5)
30. It's not quite smart being in boat with yodelers, perhaps (5)
32. Breakfast cereal, powdered (4)
35. Second person heard from a sheep (3)
37. It goes to right height (3)
39. The most forbidding and winding streets, without name (8)
40. Reeled from amount of money that limits the little woman (4)
41. Pins' tail on donkeys—fine (6)
42. Something administered badly does (4)
43. Knocking sounds from wind (4)
44. Kennedys enter your houses—what's got your bowels in an uproar (9)

#### DOWN

1. A scene is shot, meeting with medium supervising (6)
2. One who has your friendship ring first, with birthstone (4)
3. Where married people get split up in a single stroke (4)
4. Singularly leaves plate broken (5)
5. He believes nothing mysterious is in hilt (8)
6. Upset, I am foil for making phrase badly (7)
7. Slippery runway is not guarded (6)
8. Closest catch, orbiting Mars (7)
9. Somewhat sinful, naked above the wrist (4)
10. Observing is not entirely obeying (5)
14. Goes around in kilts (6)
15. Voice-over for a film actress (5)
18. Sultry dance in dry surroundings upsets those related by family (8)
20. Old boat capsized, however (3)
21. Affected a production of Menander (8)
22. Rent all but the foremost facility (4)
23. Drink in the mademoiselle (3)
24. Study over surprising event in musical composition (7)
25. Concept in thermodynamics leads to a little work in doorway (7)
27. Most strained to get, e.g., past perfect future time (7)
29. Junket-maker flipped over big bill (6)
31. Chant in step, in music (6)
32. Male models for brunch, perhaps (4)
33. The national organization we had not joined (5)
34. Wanting to be ready, read will! (5)
36. Skin blemish is turning up with strength (5)
38. Exotic poet comes in to marry (4)

### CONTEST RULES

Send completed diagram with name and address to New Directions, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by January 10. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened will receive a one-

year subscription to *Harper's*. The solution will be printed in the February issue. Winners' names will be printed in the March issue. Winners of the November puzzle, "Chinese Torture," are Sara B. Murphey, Hiltown, Pennsylvania; Pat Hubbard, Lancaster, Wisconsin; and Kati Kilham, Venice, California.



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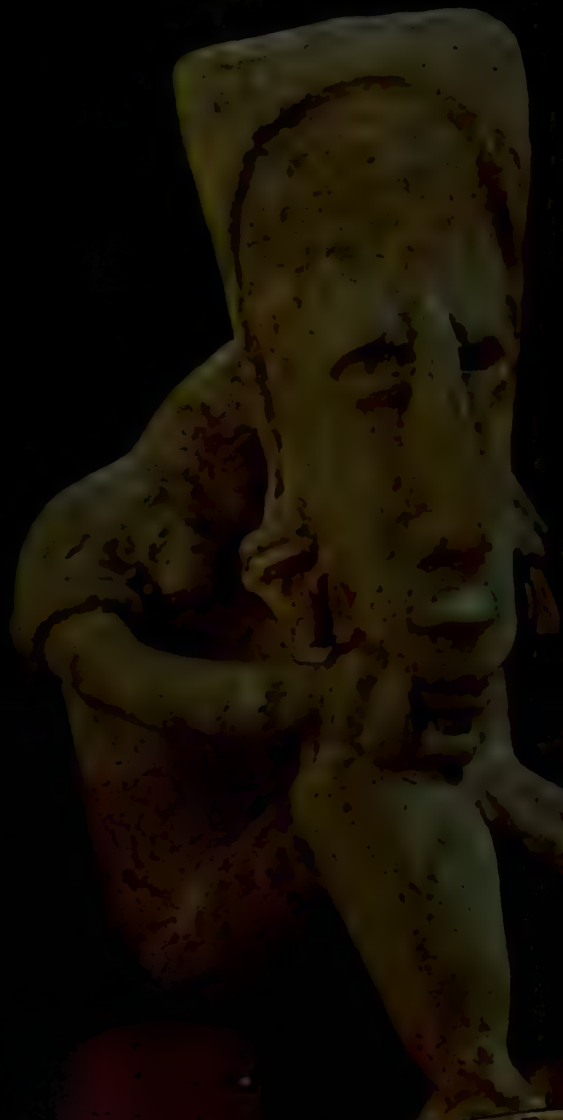


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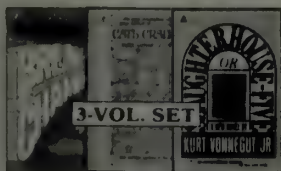
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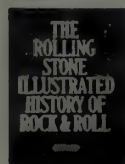
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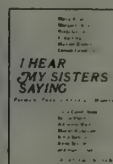
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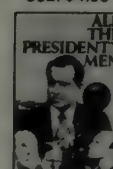
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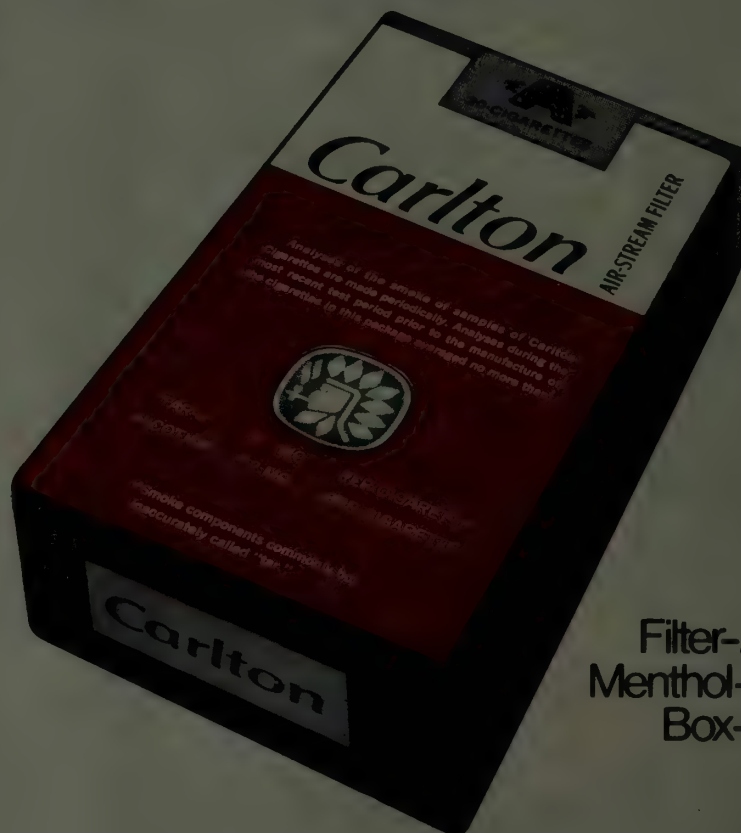
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	tar mg./ cigarette	nicotine mg./ cigarette
Brand P Non-Filter	27	1.7
Brand C Non-Filter	24	1.5
Brand W	19	1.3
Brand S Menthol	19	1.3
Brand S Menthol 100	19	1.2
Brand W 100	18	1.2
Brand M	18	1.1
Brand K Menthol	17	1.3
Brand M Box	17	1.0
Brand K	16	1.0

## Other cigarettes that call themselves low in "tar"

	tar mg./ cigarette	nicotine mg./ cigarette
Brand D	15	1.0
Brand P Box	14	0.8
Brand D Menthol	14	1.0
Brand M Lights	13	0.8
Brand W Lights	13	0.9
Brand K Milds Menthol	13	0.8
Brand T Menthol	11	0.7
Brand T	11	0.6
Brand V Menthol	11	0.8
Brand V	11	0.7
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cover design by Rostislav Eismont

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Published monthly by Harper's Magazine Company, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, a division of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. John Cowles, Jr., Chairman; Otto A. Silha, President; Donald R. Dwight, Publisher; Charles W. Arnason, Secretary; William R. Beattie, Treasurer. Subscriptions: \$8.97 one year. Foreign except Canada and Pan America: \$1.50 per year additional. For advertising information contact Harper-Atlantic Sales, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Other offices in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Copyright © 1977 by the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. All rights reserved. The trademark *Harper's* is used by Harper's Magazine Company under license, and is a registered trademark owned by Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated. Printed in the U.S.A. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send Form 3579 to Harper's Magazine, 1255 Portland Place, Boulder, Colo. 80302



# LETTERS

## Pension plans

In "The Burden of Generosity" [December], Rep. Les Aspin of Wisconsin astonishes me with this sentence: "For example, a New York City teacher who retired last year, after a thirty-year career and a \$15,000 final salary, receives, at the very least, 65 percent of his final salary in retirement benefits."

That has to be a mighty uncommon member of the United Federation of Teachers, or beneficiary of UFT negotiation.

If Representative Aspin will refer to the UFT contract with the New York City Board of Education dated September 1975-September 1977, on page 95 he will find the salary tables in force. No New York City teacher with thirty years' service could possibly have earned as little as \$15,000. With ingenuity and a lot of collusion, this thirty-year man might have been able to hold his wage down to \$16,650 without having been dismissed fifteen years earlier.

And, my, how I do wish Mr. Aspin's figures were not so far wrong, because I do wish his 65 percent retirement figures were credible. I do hear of colleagues who increase their take-home pay by retiring. But that does not have anything to do with the taxpayers' "burden of generosity." It has to do with many long years of investing current pay in retirement savings: pension, annuities, Social Security. Sure, when I find I dare to retire, I can stop contributing a third of my earnings to retirement savings. Then that money will start coming back to me, at a modest interest rate indeed, and of course I can count on Social Security if I hang in there until sixty-five, or the forty-third year of my working life.

Aside from his inaccurate information, the Representative from Wisconsin clearly has no notion of what amounts to generous wealth in New

York City. If we took his (happily baseless) figure of \$15,000 per year for a thirty-year teacher, then the teacher's 65 percent would be a fat \$9,750.

In New York City especially, I cannot believe he can regard that as generous after thirty years of service in any trade whatsoever. Taking 65 percent of the lowest conceivable pay for that thirty-year man, we get, on \$16,650, \$10,822.50. You can't live on that either unless you are too healthy to need a doctor or a dentist or a housekeeper and you are too tight to send a buck to the Red Cross at Christmas. Surely most thirty-year teachers have had the common sense (and, of course, the idealism, before the budget cuts, the layoffs, et cetera, soured them on everything but teaching itself—for teaching is unruinably a joyful work) to take their crap courses and make it at least to C-6 grade for an annual wage of \$20,300. So what is 65 percent of that? \$13,195.

I just wish Representative Aspin could arrange for me to collect the 65 percent he tells the public I am going to get. It would be especially nice if he could arrange it for me before I die in harness, because I'll be damned if I can see how I can fetch even 50 percent before then. (See pages 9-12 of the above-specified UFT contract.)

I am not crying for more "generosity" from anybody. I would rather practice a little generosity of my own. I just wish there were fewer nuts out there in Congress and in the press talking with seriousness and indignation about how schoolteachers, of all people, milk that great big generous public.

Nothing would please me more than if Representative Aspin would junket to New York City and attend a class or two of mine and then come to lunch with me and my teacher companions. I do not doubt that in future articles of his we would no longer show up

as burdensome beneficiaries of public generosity. People do not like to be considered freeloaders, certainly not in *Harper's*. •

WINIFRED SCOTT  
New York, N.Y.

Les Aspin advances inaccurate and misleading generalizations and half-truths, which only obfuscate already misunderstood facts about the federal retirement system. Representative Aspin fails to perceive the need to establish a fundamental distinction between the federal retirement system and other state and local government programs. The widely diverse funding, contributory, and service standards of the various public programs make the lump-sum approach to analysis which he employs both impractical and ill-advised. Indeed, given the divergence of the various staff retirement programs within the federal system, a better approach would have been to focus on the problems of a specific program. Representative Aspin's shotgun approach to analysis does both his well-regarded reputation and 1.5 million civil-service annuitants a disservice.

Representative Aspin writes that "in private pension schemes, management or employees or both pay into a fund." Not so reports Robert Tilore's highly respected study. In *Public Employee Pension Funds*, published in 1976, Tilore writes, "Employee contributions are almost as rare in private pension programs as they are prevalent in public plans. . . . Almost 80 percent of workers under private plans make no contributions."

Civil-service employees contribute at least 7 percent of their monthly paycheck while they are on active service to provide for their retirement. By law, the government as employer must match their contributions. Upon retirement, in order to provide survivor benefits, the annuity is further reduced by 2.5 percent of the first \$3,600 of the annuity, and by 10 percent for any amount over that figure. The reduction serves to insure that the survivor will receive 55 percent of the





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## LETTERS

total annuity when the annuitant dies. Survivor provision, often at full or near-total annuity levels, is the norm in the private sector.

Representative Aspin charges that it would be the taxpayers who would be forced to bear the burden of costs when civil-service employees win extra benefits. The record proves otherwise. Increased employee contributory levels and survivor provision costs, as well as the declining quality of coverage of the federal life-insurance program, attest to the increasing burdens which workers themselves must bear for their own staff retirement system. As the law precludes civil-service personnel from outright coverage by Social Security, federal annuitants are forced to bear a disproportionate tax burden to their private sector counterparts, whose retirement incomes are predicated upon a tax-free Social Security base. Unlike his fellow Americans, a federal annuitant does not qualify for Section A of Medicare, the hospitalization coverage section so badly sought after by most older individuals. The civil-service employee must purchase that coverage at a monthly rate of \$35. It is worth noting that the median annuity for all civil-service annuitants, from ex-Presidents and members of Congress to the lowest GS grade personnel, is approximately \$500 per month. For the great majority of these individuals, that is their sole source of retirement income, fully taxed at every level of government, and reduced monthly for survivor, health, and life-insurance coverage. Hardly a windfall!

The most ill-advised of all of Representative Aspin's assertions was the one in which he attempted to scandalize the federal retirement program for having a cost-of-living adjustment mechanism, which many private sector plans do not. As a result of the cost-of-living feature instituted for civil-service annuitants in 1962, a similar cost-of-living mechanism was added to the provisions made for the nation's Social Security recipients. The logic for such a feature is clear; those living on fixed or relatively fixed incomes require adjustments so as to better confront the cruel pressures that double-digit inflation can exert against them. To argue against cost-of-living adjustments for civil-service annuitants is to argue against similar features for Social Security recipients,

and against the efforts of every union presently arguing for this logical protection for its membership.

CHARLES L. MERIN  
Legislative Representative  
National Association of  
Retired Federal Employees  
Washington, D.C.

### LES ASPIN REPLIES:

Miss Scott has two basic points: (1) that no teacher earns \$15,000 after thirty years and therefore my figures are screwy, and (2) that she won't get a 65 percent pension.

In analyzing various pension plans one needs a base reference point. I used the hypothetical final salary of \$15,000 and then calculated how much retirees would receive under different pension schemes. I could have used \$10,000 or \$20,000; the point was to use the same figure so that the calculations would be comparable.

Instead of showing that the New York City teachers' pension was 2.4 times as generous as the steelworkers' pension scheme, a different hypothetical salary might show it to be "only" 2.2 times as generous—or it might show it 2.6 times as generous. The change in the statistic, however, would in no way alter the conclusion about the generosity of the pension plan.

Miss Scott's second point is that she won't get a 65 percent pension, and doesn't expect to do better than 50 percent. The 65 percent figure was confirmed to my office by, among others, the Kinzel Commission and the New York City Board of Education as accurate for a thirty-year teacher retiring last year. But let's just accept the 50 percent figure for the sake of argument. It is still almost double the steelworkers' benefit I cited in the article as one of the more generous private-industry pensions.

A couple retiring at age sixty-five after earning \$20,000 will need only a 40 percent pension to maintain their purchasing power. That's because they get Social Security, which is untaxed; their pension is in a lower tax bracket; and they no longer have to pay the Social Security tax. (With a \$15,000 salary, a pension of only 30 percent is needed because Social Security will represent a larger proportion of income.) A 50 percent pension would actually result in an increase in purchasing power. It is not the paltry sum

that Miss Scott believes it to be.

Miss Scott can adjust her pension figures any way she wishes, but the numbers will point inexorably to the same conclusion—that government pensions, are on the average, significantly more generous than private industry pensions.

Mr. Merin's letter raises several points. First, he argues that my statement "in private pension schemes management or employees or both pay into a fund" is not true. It is true. In 1974 federal law required that private pension schemes be fully funded, i.e., that enough money be paid into the fund (from both management and employees) to fulfill the promises which the pension scheme makes.

To be sure, as Mr. Merin pointed out, in private programs employee contributions are very rare and most of the paying in is done by management. One of the good features of the federal civil-service program is the 7 percent contribution made by employees—certainly that is better than the zero contribution made by the military.

But the Federal Service Retirement Program still does not meet the requirement that the federal law has established for private pensions: namely, that they be fully funded. Both the civil servant and the federal government together pay into retirement a sum equal to 14 percent of pay. But the Board of Actuaries of the Civil Service says that a payment of 22.5 percent is needed to cover all the pension promises. And that assumes no inflation; at 4 percent inflation the cost rises to 40 percent of salary, according to the actuaries. Who is going to make up the difference? Tomorrow's taxpayers, of course.

Second, Mr. Merin says that the median annuity for all civil-service annuitants is approximately \$500 per month and says this is "hardly a windfall." The average pension was indeed only \$528 as of June 1975. But that average is deceptive, since it includes tens of thousands of persons who worked for the federal government only five or ten years. As Mr. Merin knows, more than half the civil-service pensioners worked less than twenty-four years—hardly a full career. (Mr. Merin is undoubtedly familiar with the Civil Service Commission's 1972 survey of annuitants' income which produced these statis-



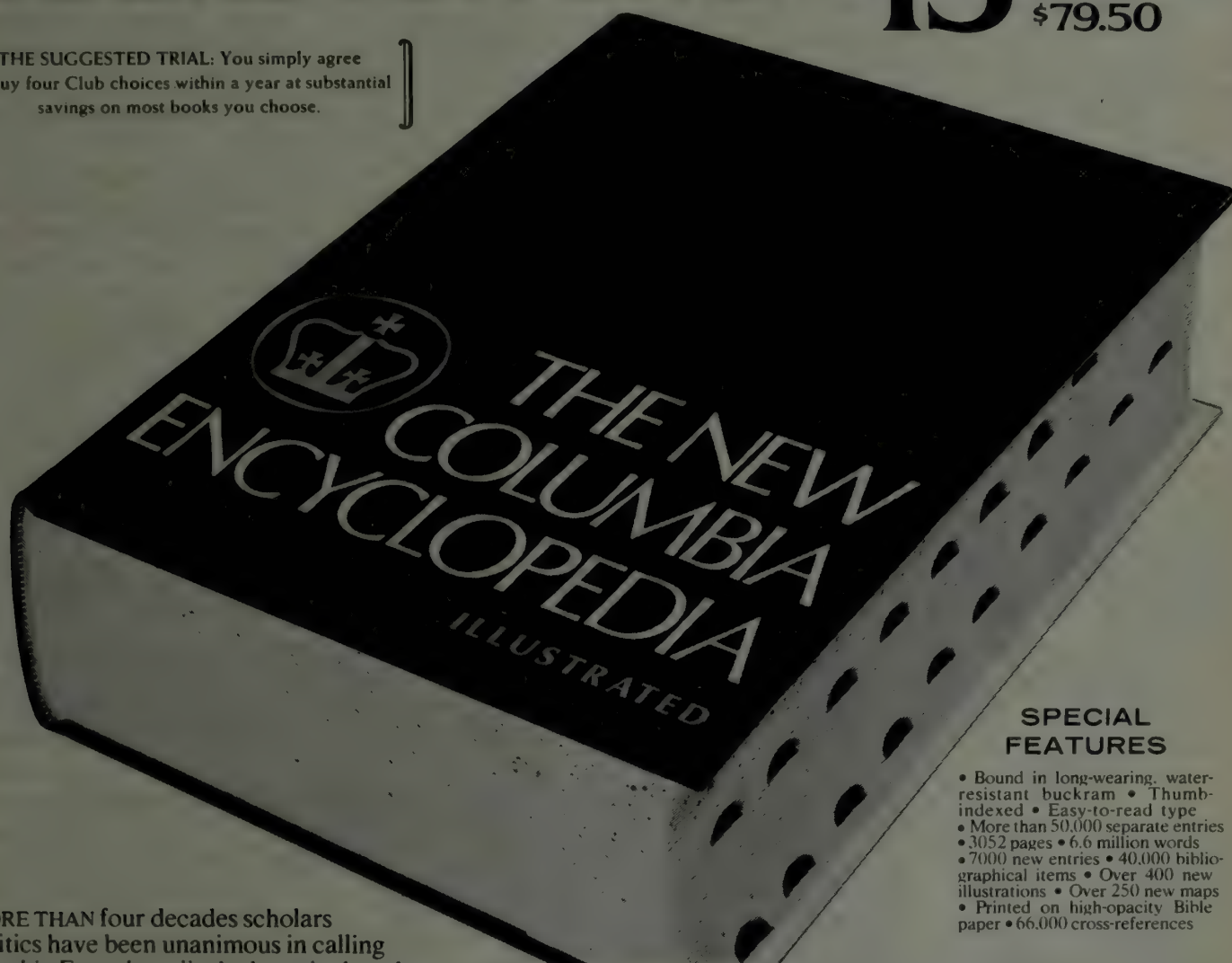
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—Jacques Barzun



## LETTERS

tics.) Mr. Merin is correct that civil servants don't pay anything into the Social Security system. He is also undoubtedly aware that the 1972 survey shows that 58 percent of all civil-service pensioners age sixty-five and over collect Social Security because they worked long enough at some other job to qualify. While Mr. Merin says the great majority of annuitants have no income other than their pension, the survey shows that 71.3 percent have outside income and that that income is greater than their pensions!

Third, Mr. Merin sets up a straw man, pretending that I am arguing against inflation protection for pensioners, including those on Social Security. As anyone can see from the original article, I said no such thing. I did say that the inflation protection for federal retirees was substantially better than that available anywhere in the private sector. I might now add that it is also better, albeit not so substantially, than that available under Social Security.

Nothing written by either Mr. Merin or Miss Scott counters what I wrote about the burden and the generosity of public pensions. In fact, they simply underscore many of the points I made in the article.

### Redeeming social value

Despite my reluctance to read articles about pornography, I read Burton Wohl's pious reflections ["The Reluctant Pornographer"] in the December *Harper's*. It was good to discover that Jimmy Carter and I aren't the only ones with lust in our hearts and virtue in our actions. But, more important, I was inspired to share my similar experiences with your readers. Determined to confront the filth about which I had (reluctantly) read so much, one evening I put on my raincoat and drove to a hideous and squalid section of the city, where there were three theaters showing pornographic movies. "So this is what pornography does to a city," I thought, as I surveyed the area filled with dingy factories, run-down houses, and liquor stores. Reluctantly, I joined the factory workers, salesmen, young couples, and other perverts in one theater after another. I began to feel very embarrassed—I was the only person with a raincoat. The stuff on the screen wasn't

so bad at first, but it soon reached the bottom line. It was like TV without commercials—almost as bad as *Marathon Man* or *The Godfather*. At that point I decided that I would let my children see *Jaws* before I would let them see some of those movies. An hour later, I left in disgust.

On my way home, I stopped to visit friends, the Smiths. The family was assembled in front of the TV set, watching *Macon County Line*. They were just as I had last seen them, one month earlier, although at that time they were watching the Dean Martin show. I was there only a short time, spanning no more than a score of commercials. By the time the second ad for a "feminine hygiene" product finished, I had developed uncontrollable nausea and threw up. Fortunately, I still had on my raincoat, and did not soil my prefaded Levi's. I said goodbye, live and be well, and I left. When I arrived home, I had two bourbons with water, one Compazine, and three Valiums, and dreamed that I was playing both title roles in *Marat/Sade*.

Now, I know this letter can't compare with Mr. Wohl's article. It lacks his penetrating psychological insight and incisive sociological analysis—and his poetical prose. All I can claim is an equal moral impact. Therefore, I don't expect you to pay me for it.

STEPHEN STOUDE  
Indianapolis, Ind.

### The new lexicography

Well, we all know the multit talented Dr. Frumkes, of course, at least by reputation, which needn't detain us. I think I almost had him when he was teaching a course called "The Art of the Short Story" at the Columbia University School of General Studies, though it may have been someone with a beard like his. Possibly Charles Evans Hughes.

His latest contribution to lexicography, "A Volley of Words" [December], doubtless fills one or more needs, but not a need for *darkling*, which can already be found in the dictionaries. Instead of that, why not simply *chronmel* for someone chronically melancholy, until we think of something appropriately funny? Or *drip*.

Please understand, I don't want to

carp (fish, net, or gig for carp). I also am a nomgenist, in a small far from frivolous way, having created besides *nomgenist*, such other new words as *enswelm*, to describe the process of benignly covering over a penetrating, and also to provide a word to rhyme with *helm*. This was when John Masefield was poet laureate.

While I'm about it, I may as well mention that it was I who gave nonscientific use (that is, one not relating to mathematics or biology) *trinomial*, to describe names of fashionable preachers and high-toned scholars and the like with three proper names in tandem—such as Charles Evans Hughes (and Lewis Burke Frumkes). And it certainly is appropriate to remind readers here that I was the one who gave *frumkes* the meaning of "dowdy chatelaine" (The frumkes met me at the door wearing a greasy kimono.)

But enough about my credentials. Frumkes is a good man, but I don't know what he is up to—or out of, for that matter. *Kikidoori* for a pearl-lily growth occasionally uncovered during root-canal surgery? Obviously, it's a small marsupial inhabiting some of the more arid parts of the Australian bush.

There are more important things for Frumkes to be thinking about—chiefly nostalgia, which the usually reliable Webster's Unabridged, Second Edition curtly dismisses as "homesickness," when most of us would say something like "a haunting yearning for something known in the past."

We know that. What we need is a related word for something even more difficult to define—a sort of nostalgic feeling for something existing in the present. There may even be a need for an adjective to apply to a nostalgic feeling for something that can exist only in the future. But, personally, try not to think about the future, and if Frumkes has any words for it I don't much want to hear them.

ARTHUR HALLIBURTON  
Little Rock, Ark.

### LEWIS BURKE FRUMKES REPLIES:

Please understand I don't want to carp (fish, net, or gig for carp). I am far too busy thinking about more important things, chiefly nostalgia. But personally I try not to think about the future, and if I have any words for it I don't much want to hear them.



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# THE LANGUAGE OF MAMMON

Notes on the pathology of money

by Lewis H. Lapham

*Money, and not morality, is the principle of commercial nations.*

—Thomas Jefferson

**T**HE FOLLOWING NOTES have to do with the corruptions of meaning implicit in the language of Mammon. The pathological condition otherwise known as the love or worship of money has become fairly general in the United States, but the people who celebrate its mysteries seldom provide an adequate statement of their creed. Possibly this is because their contemplation of money, its radiance and divine origins, deprives them of their capacity to think. Possibly they assume that everybody knows what they mean.

This is not always so. I take it for granted that the reader needs no instruction about either the necessity or the pleasure of money. But the worship of money requires a change of meaning in the use of ordinary words. The redefinitions reflect a disordered perception that translates itself into phenomena as diverse as the Nixon White House, a city slum, and the stuff of network television.

**CREDO:** If money can buy everything worth having, if it can prolong life, win elections, relieve suffering, declare war, command praise, hire assassins, and go south in the winter, then surely it can triumph over so small a thing as death.

**REVELATION:** Notorious swindlers ride through the streets in limousines; dishonest politicians hold offices of public authority and trust; women of blemished reputation inherit oil refineries and inspire the love of

princes. From these meager observations of the world's injustice, the devotees make a child's religion. In the moment of their enlightenment, which brings with it a paralysis of both feeling and thought, they substitute the magical substance of money for the substance of life itself. The experience has much in common with the visionary delusions attributed to Christian saints. A reason for the veneration of accountants.

**HOLY DREAD:** The feeling appropriate to the mention of a sum in excess of \$100,000.

**SALVATION:** A function of net worth. Richard Nixon sells his memoirs for \$2 million and thereby restores himself to grace.

**INNOCENCE:** Guaranteed by the possession of sufficient wealth. Just as money promises immortality, so also does it prevent a man from falling into error. How can a god commit a crime?

**OTHER PEOPLE'S FUNERALS:** Consummations devoutly to be wished. When a man dies, he becomes an estate. His friends no longer need concern themselves with the waywardness of a living mind. Flesh has been translated into property, which represents the only apotheosis available to a commercial society.

**ART:** Whatever sells. Once an author or artist has demonstrated his capacity to make money he acquires, as if by court order, a reputation for genius.

*Lewis H. Lapham is the editor of Harper's.*



**INHERITED WEALTH:** More troublesome than many people might think. Because the inheritors seldom know how to earn money, they come to think of it as a magical stone or lamp given to their great-grandfather by a djinn who happened to be crossing the track of the Southern Pacific Railroad on a warm afternoon in 1884. To different families the djinn appeared at different times in different disguises, either as an old prospector who gave away a claim to the Comstock mine, or as an immigrant engineer, benign and shabbily dressed, who invented a process for smelting steel and then sold it for a pittance to the founder of the family fortune. Under no matter what circumstances the title to wealth was conferred, the heirs know one thing for certain: the djinn has come and gone, and won't be coming back.

**HOMOSEXUALITY:** Preferable to heterosexuality because it eliminates the dimension of time. If no child can result from the union, then none of the people present need worry about the rumor of death.

**FEAR:** Constant. The abyss looms on all sides. A man who has confused his money with his life finds himself threatened by enemies of infinite number—thieves, journalists, IRS agents, blackmailers, unscrupulous brokers, unknown women, and populist sentiment in Cleveland. The rich remain certain that nobody would help them in their distress, and that nowhere in the entire world would they find sympathy for their fall into ruin and disgrace. In this, of course, they are correct, which explains their



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## THE EASY CHAIR

huddling together in Southampton or Palm Beach, or, in Fitzgerald's phrase, "wherever it is that people go and are rich together." Fitzgerald missed the point of his own observation. Where else except among their own kind can the rich feel safe from the justifiable depredations of the less fortunate? Vide the paranoia of the late Howard Hughes.

**CAMPAIGN PROMISES:** The political equivalent of a rich man's incessant revision of his will.

**THE INFIDEL:** Anybody unaccustomed to the ritual obedience to money. A man or woman who believes that money constitutes a lesser form of power, that greater forms of power arise from the wellsprings of the human imagination or the force of a moral intelligence.

**TIME PRESENT:** Identical with time past and time future. The party never ends.

**ADVICE AND COUNSEL:** Gratefully received from somebody richer than oneself. This follows from the assumption

that the richer man stands that much closer to the godhead.

**SLANDER:** The most satisfactory form of gossip. It subtracts from the reputation, and therefore from the net worth, of the third or fourth parties under discussion.

**MAGIC:** The aura of money. Thus the observation of a newspaper columnist who once confessed that he was terrified of flying in commercial aircraft. He noticed that his fear deserted him when he traveled in a plane belonging either to a corporation, an individual worth more than \$25 million, or a candidate for the Presidency of the United States.

**HUMAN BEINGS:** Commodities. Toward the end of last year's football season, Howard Cosell, always a leading indicator of market opinion, provided a clear statement of the principle. During the course of the Oakland-Cincinnati game, he received a procession of celebrities in his broadcasting booth. Reggie Jackson appeared briefly to acknowledge his signing of a \$3 million contract with

the New York Yankees, and Jimmy Connors reported earnings of \$80,000 at a tennis tournament in Las Vegas. In the fourth quarter, having lost interest in the events on the field, Cosell drifted off into an ecstatic reverie. To Frank Gifford he said: "Well, Frank, we had a lot of money in the booth tonight."

He didn't think it necessary to mention the names of the people to whom the money was attached. The names weren't important. Athletes come and go, some of them in triumph and some of them carried off on stretchers, but the money goes on forever.

**MURDER:** Often necessary and always permissible. Once a man has persuaded himself that his money constitutes his life and breath, he has no choice but to pursue his financial interest to its most ruthless conclusion. To take his money is to take away his life.

**LUXURY:** Indistinguishable from necessity. The reason a rich man feels deprived if forced to relinquish even one of his sailboats.

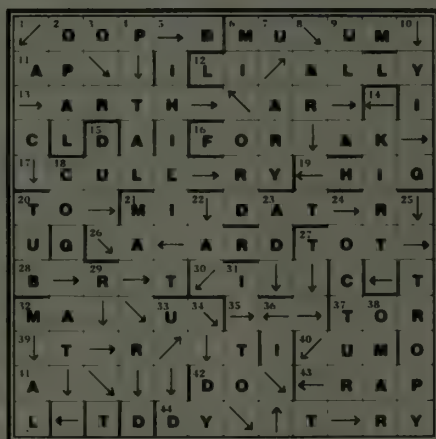
**FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION:** Within proper limits, and always bearing in mind the need for vigilance and restraint, a condition favorable to business. A modest degree of agitation on behalf of the human spirit often leads to the discovery of something that can be sold at a profit.

**ESTABLISHMENT:** Organizational support for the belief that nobody becomes fully human until he possesses an income of at least \$50,000 a year. Below that level of consciousness a man still can be confused with an ape.

**NARCISSISM:** The ground of being.

**TAXES:** Calamities of nature. Inexplicable. Comparable to a famine or drought.

**CHILDREN:** *Memento mori.* If a man believes himself immortal, then his children obviously become a source of irritation and unhappiness. By striking at his children, usually by means of withholding money or affection, he strikes at the presumption of his own death. □



## Solution to the January Puzzle

### Notes for "New Directions"

**Across:** 1. s(wo)lped; 6. m(ise)ums; 11. (flaps)es; 12. line-ally; 13. ear-then-war-E; 16. for-sake; 17. scullery (pun, "scull" is a crew "shell"); 19. Whig (wig); 20. to-(divid)e; 21. misdaters(anagram); 26. (U.)se-award; 27. tot-e(asily); 28. b(E.R.)et; 30. S.(wis(e))S.; 32. masseuse (anagram); 35. ewe (you); 37. to-r.; 39. ster(n.)est; 40. s(w.)um; 41. asses-s; 42. dose (anagram); 43. wrap (rap); 44. dysentery (hidden). **Down:** 1. seance(anagram); 2. O-pal; 3. oner (reversal of RENO); 4. petal(anagram); 5. nihilist (anagram); 6. I'm (reversal)-sword; 7. unwary (anagram); 8. ne(Ares)t; 9. ulna (hidden); 10. (ob)eying; 14. skirts (two meanings); 15. Dunne (done); 18. se(tango)c, (reversal); 20. tub (reversal); 21. mannered (anagram); 22. (l)ease; 23. ade(hidden); 24. con(reversal)-turns; 25. entr(op.)y; 27. tenses-t.; 29. rennet(reversal); 31. in-tone; 32. meal(anagram); 33. U.N.-we'd; 34. need-Y; 36. wen-is(reversal); 38. Omar (hidden).



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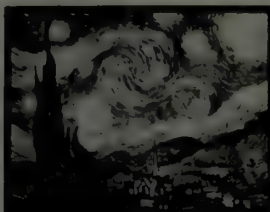
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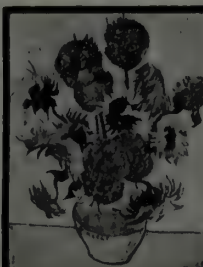
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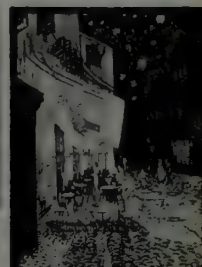
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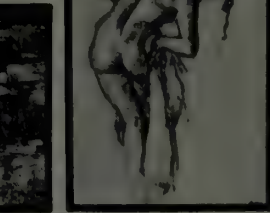
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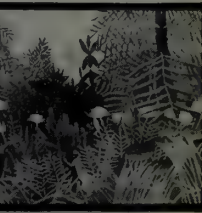
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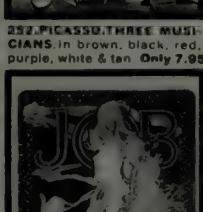
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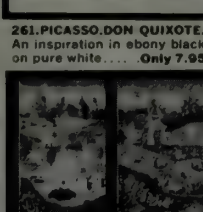
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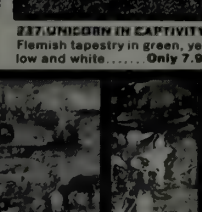
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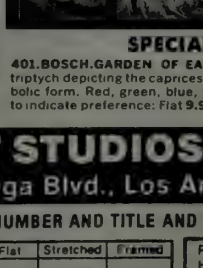
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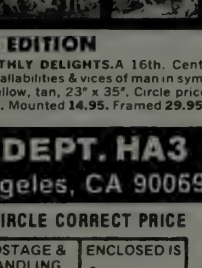
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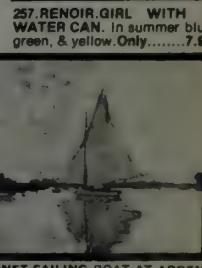
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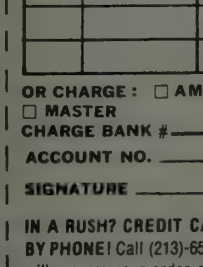
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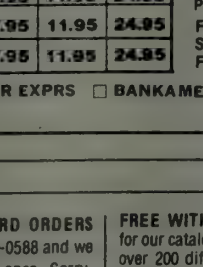
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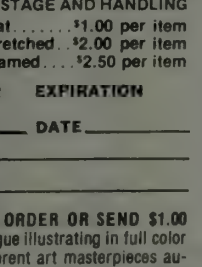
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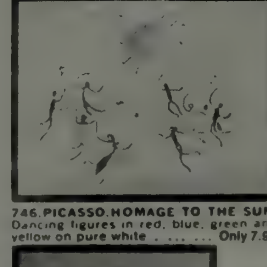
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# THE NEWSPEAK GENERATION

The media as unwitting custodians of literacy

by Reed Whittemore

**O**NLY TEN YEARS ago I attended an elaborate and expensive conference, sponsored by the Carnegie people, at which teachers from England as well as the United States troubled each other for four weeks at Dartmouth College on the subject of the teaching of English, and especially the teaching of writing. The enthusiasts at the meeting were full of the news that the old disciplinary approach to language was evil, and they treated the novelty-weary cynics in attendance to descriptions of lovely, open, unstructured classrooms where depressed, deprived, and frustrated children learned to be creative and find themselves. They also whipped "standard English" soundly and sent it packing, it being alternately a moth-eaten inheritance from a medieval curriculum for monks, and a crude nineteenth-century device for keeping the British Empire together by demanding conformity and decorum. Just recently I attended another, shorter conference—this one sponsored by journalists—dedicated to the problem of why Johnny can't read, and at this last event I sensed that "standard English" was back in again. The participants wanted English teachers to rush to their classrooms and ply their students with correct usage—that is, return to the kind of pedagogy that much of the

Dartmouth conference was devoted to questioning.

The shift that I observed at this meeting (sponsored by the Washington Journalism Center) may be partly illusory, the result of mixing English teachers and journalists in the order indicated. After all, English teachers love to look for complexities, journalists for simplicities, and right now the journalists, having read about the national decline in verbal test scores, are full of their usual compulsion to *do* something, whereas the English teachers at Dartmouth had a different compulsion; they wanted to undo what they felt had long been badly done. I don't, however, think the shift is just in my head. The air is genuinely full of complaints, recriminations; and though some English teachers deny that anything has occurred except the turning on of media loudspeakers, most agree that "fundamentals," whatever they are, are now full of grace. Also, no one who keeps up with the press can miss its steady demands that English teachers be held "accountable" or "responsible" for planting the "fundamentals" in the nation's head.

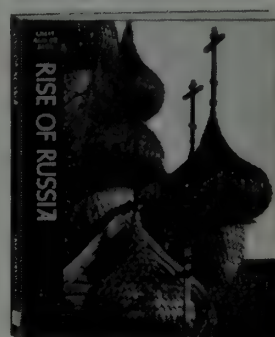
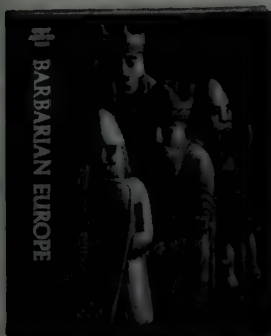
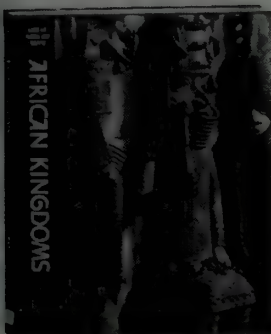
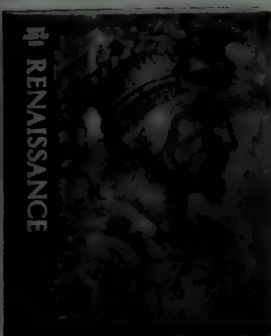
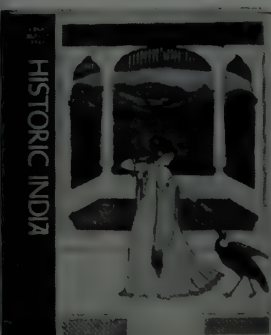
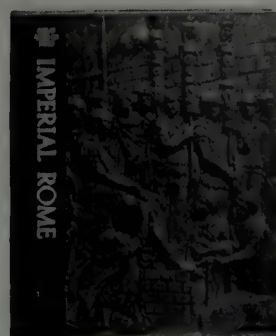
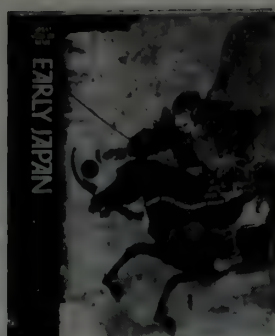
As an English fixture myself, I don't

propose to accept any such responsibility. I made my irresponsibility clear at the journalists' meeting, and they were surprised. If I wasn't responsible, who was? If I couldn't decide whether a freshman was literate or not, and if I couldn't then proclaim him either able to proceed in college or unable to do so, then who could? And so on. I think they thought they had me (politely and amicably) cornered, but I didn't feel cornered. I felt enlightened. I felt that they were giving me a sense of what the new trend amounts to, making clear to me that it is indeed a journalistic affair. English teachers are not only not the trend's most sympathetic observers and backers, but they represent—to the degree that an amorphous beast-bird-fish can represent anything—the opposition. They are still back at Dartmouth, and for them the main issue is not that of assigning responsibility but of finding out how to *be* responsible. They do not regard a fundamental as a simple thing to teach. They introduce difficulties, barriers that the journalists despise.

At Dartmouth, for instance, the annoyance with simple correctness as a basic standard was pervasive. I remember particularly the polemics of David Holbrook on the subject. Holbrook, a big words-as-symbols man from England, had a conception of literacy that

*Reed Whittemore is a professor of English at the University of Maryland and the author of several volumes of poetry. His most recent book is The Poet as Journalist.*





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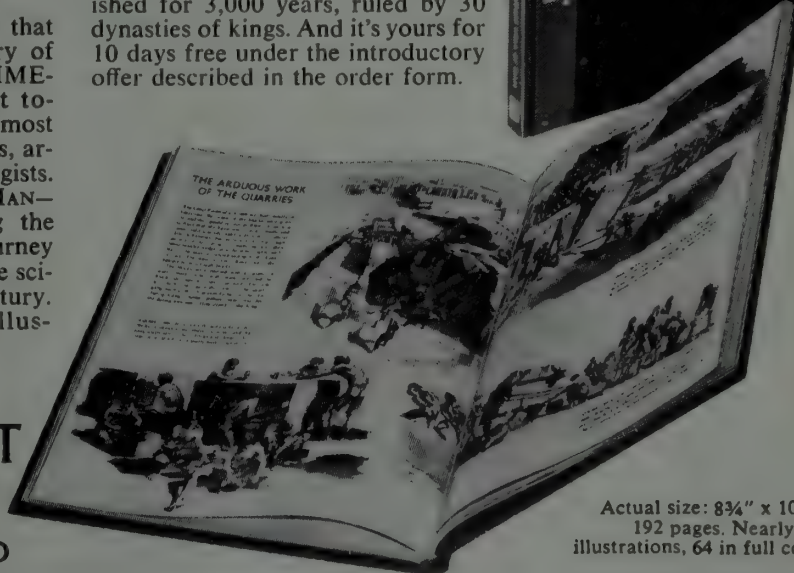
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## THE NEWSPEAK GENERATION

was wonderfully broad and modern, Sixties modern. He defined literacy "in its deepest and widest sense" as "the capacity to deal with inner and outer experience"; and since he was himself a sort of lay psychologist he was a devotee of *inner* experience, especially as that experience was made known in plain vanilla images. One of the examples he provided was a poem about a yellow bird by a "backward student" that reminded Holbrook instantly of William Blake's "Ah, Sunflower!" Here is the student's poem:

### *A poem*

*A little yellow Bird sat on my  
window sill, he hop and popped  
about, he wisheld he cherped.  
I tried to chash my little yellow  
bird, but he flew in to the  
golden yellow sun,  
O how I wish that was my yellow  
brid.*

For Holbrook everything that was fundamental about the expressive act was somehow contained in that little poem, and he presented it to us with all its misspellings because he wanted to insist—and how he could insist—that the misspellings were trivial, that the usual old pedagogic ways of deciding that students were "backward" were absurd, and that this poem's author was not backward at all but way ahead of most children his age in his feeling for the meaning of the yellow bird. That student, Holbrook was sure, was sensing something wonderfully basic in his little poem, something psychically connected with Blake's sunflower as it reached wearily for a better world beyond itself. The fundamental? It was *there*.

Our present activists would have a great deal of trouble with Holbrook, and at the time I did too, wishing that he would be more verbal and less soulful. But from the distance of ten years the most questionable part of his vision of the fundamental now seems to me to be something else again—that is, his simple insistence that *literature* is fundamental. For Holbrook the fundamental was always and forever to be discovered where traditionalists have always discovered it, in our literary past; and so, though he professed to be very radical and psychological and up-to-date, he simply assumed that all children, backward or forward, would reach out for the fundamental through literature, would not only make arche-

typal connections with Blake but actually read Blake. He could agree with others at the conference that some of the great works of the past had become turkeys (one of the big examples of a turkey at the conference was *Silas Marner*) but he thought that a teacher had merely to be intelligently selective to find in the past works that would be palatable to modern children. At no time did he dream, at least in public, of an educational condition in which the English literary past was not a part of the fundament. Some of the American English teachers at the meeting did dream of such a condition, but even they did not publicly gloom about its nearness. It *was* near. In ten years it has arrived. The fundamental is now not at all what it was.

As far as I can tell, the fundamental is now somehow imbedded in the phrase "functional literacy"; at least the common understanding *outside* English departments is that it is imbedded there. A functional literate is a happy modern American who has learned to cope with income-tax forms, questionnaires, the small print in contracts. Or, on the writing side, a functional literate is a happy amateur grammarian-secretary American capable of cleaning up the boss's correspondence errors. To the average English teacher this conception of literacy is the devil's work. He is likely to observe that the income-tax forms and questionnaires are themselves instances of the illiterate, and that what most American businesses and professions expect in the way of standard English is so loaded with specialist jargon as not to be properly standard at all. Why, he wonders, should *English* teachers be held accountable for such literacy? To hold them accountable is like telling someone who has lost a big battle to keep cats out of the house that he must now take charge of the cats.

**T**HUS DO I acknowledge what most of my colleagues would probably not wish to acknowledge, that English teachers have lost the battle about the cats. I am of two minds about the loss, though. On the one hand, I think of it as a professional loss, a loss of English department power and stature to new academic forces. On the other

hand, I think of it as a large cultural loss, something bigger than the whole teaching profession. Let me discuss the professional loss first.

The decline of student enrollment in English (and in the humanities in general) does seem to be real. The national trend is toward vocational courses, and it is that trend which must be blamed for the new "functional literacy" credo. Clearly, those who adopt the credo are imagining that an efficient vocational course will soon be devised that will achieve functional literacy for the whole nation in a few easy lessons, preferably by the use of some as yet uninvented audio-visual machine. My sad guess is that the trend is permanent, that the humanities are simply dead and don't know it yet, that they have gone the way of the classics. My evidence is private, fragmentary, and wholly convincing, consisting of such discoveries as a bookstore humanities shelf with nothing on it but books by psychologists and doctors on how to make love. My brain is loaded with deathly detail like that, and it all adds up to a takeover—by journalists and social scientists—of great magnitude. The young of my profession should, I keep thinking, head for the hills.

The demise of my profession would not be of great national import if the profession's duties, transplanted, were conceived to be merely the teaching of functional literacy: I see no reason why the teachers in education, behavioral psychology, business, and the rest could not take on such pedagogy themselves in their off hours, teaching their students the difference between *their* and *there* as they perform their more important professional duties. They might well even be able to improve on English-teacher pedagogy, since they could then promote their specialist verbiage without being troubled by outside dissonance.

But if English departments are in fact dead, or about to be, the departments that remain should be taught to understand who or what will *really* be in charge of the great language machine as they do their teaching. TV will be in charge, that's what, TV with an assist from the newspapers. TV and the newspapers are now fighting for their supremacy over us, and between them they will soon have every bit of us. McLuhan was mostly right a decade



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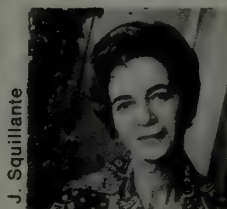
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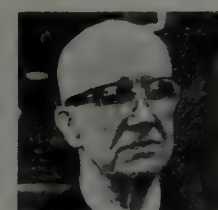
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## THE NEWSPEAK GENERATION

or so ago when he announced the end of the age of Gutenberg. We will never again look to old books for our language standards. Our language standards are now to be set by Barbara Walters.

Or perhaps they are to be set by William S. Paley, Katherine Graham, Clay Felker, and the like, they being the media entrepreneurs *behind* the performers (not that Barbara Walters is not an entrepreneur). Wouldn't it be pleasant to hold these fine, substantial figures responsible, accountable for literacy? Then surely the teachers of literacy would be much better paid than they are now by the taxpayers, and surely also the teachers would be far more efficient than they are now, if only because they would not be given to messing around with difficult concepts of literacy like David Holbrook's. They would sit in the television and journalism departments of our schools and take as their models for the fundamental the daily emanations of the media, while the Grahams and the Paleys looked down benignly upon them.

This prospect is no joke, and what is striking about the prospect is that correct usage is at its center.

TV has become the most potent force we have for verbal decorum. TV is where any slight verbal aberration looms up like a genuine fourteen-carat fundamental, just as any slight disarray of clothing or a smudge on the nose will knock several points off a Nielsen rating. TV is therefore where the maintenance of a strict norm of accent, syntax, and style has proved to be vital. So far that norm has been most conservative, deriving its texture from Midwestern voices like Walter Cronkite's (though it can use a British accent for high thought) and its verbal rules from the old "standard English."

As for the newspapers, they are less decorous and less uniform, but not greatly so. Journalists are conservative writers. Their innovations of recent years, whereby the reporter may speak personally and abandon the who-what-where-when-why procedure in favor of coy lead-ins and other gratuitous distractions, have proved to be superficial. A reporter, new or old, continues to like to put a subject down, a verb and an object—and to proceed that way until he has reached the bottom of the page and can go home. His job

demands that he be methodical, straightforward, and obedient. He can't afford to be otherwise. He needs a clear norm to which he *can* be obedient, or his nerves will complain. Essentially, then, he is in the position of the TV performer.

So it is quite natural that the new demands for correct usage should come from such sources, and perhaps English teachers should even be grateful that these sources have stirred the language pot. But if the result of the new demands is to be the creation of a new era of correct-usage pedagogy, the masters of the new era might be well advised to take a few tips from those who thought they were the masters of the old.

They might be well advised, that is, to consider what problems their correct-usage pedagogy will *not* solve. As I see these problems, they are three. First, there is the problem of what happens to literacy in the long run, when the past standards of literacy are put aside in favor of standards emerging solely from consensus imperatives of the moment. (How long will Barbara Walters and her successors be able to *remember* standard English when they are their own source?) Second, there is the problem of how to impose discipline or order of any kind at all upon a basic language format as cockeyed as a newspaper or TV program. And, third, there is the biggest problem, the spiritual problem of what to do with the enormous mental passivity that is bred into the loyal citizens of medi-land. I see nobody, from Mr. Paley down, paying these truly fundamental problems any heed, but there they are, and they are not going away. The language beast is sluggish but determined in its movements, and with TV and the newspapers now wholly in the saddle I must suppose that another ten years will produce even greater changes than we have seen since Dartmouth.

**U**NFORTUNATELY, NONE of the three problems seems to be soluble by the correct-usage route—that is, by working for a simplistic standard of functional literacy. They are not soluble by the easy route because they are not easy. They are infinitely complicated. They affect and touch on man's whole think-

ing process. The media people are simply not prepared for them, at least professionally. Professionally they do not need to worry either about the inner life of language that David Holbrook described, or about the connections between any one story—or paragraph, or squib—and another. They are specialists of the most intense kind even when they conduct their daily big-think. Their profession demands of them that they think in fragments that they wear blinders.

Necessarily, they pass this professionalism on to their customers. As the modern American mind moves from the want ads to the comics to the editorials to the six o'clock news with its twelve different items and nine commercials, it is getting an education that might be good for rabbits—since rabbits are organically tied to the principle of hopping—but is very hard on a mental apparatus that has traditionally kept its cells in good order not by hopping but by *concentrating* (to concentrate: to bring or draw to a common center or point of union). Both reading and writing, under the old Gutenberg dispensation, encouraged concentration. A book was to live with for a while as it progressed more or less in one direction and gathered unto itself a bundle of matter that mostly *cohered* (to cohere: to stick, or stick together; cleave), and usually required considerable effort to *comprehend* (to comprehend: to take in, include, or embrace within a certain scope). In other words, reading a book was an act of some private will requiring energy and effort on the part of the reader. So was the act, the old act, of writing. As David Holbrook put it, to write literately one had to draw on a mental *capacity* of some magnitude (capacity: the power of receiving or containing; specifically, the power of containing a certain quantity exactly), and whether the writer thought of the writing act as a way of dealing with "inner and outer experience," or a method of putting together the sentences and paragraphs that would clearly, honestly, accurately, gracefully, and fully *express* that inner and outer experience (to express: to force out by pressure; to utter one's thoughts; make known one's opinions or feelings), in either case the writer was up against a challenge to *all his powers* (power: an endowment of a voluntary being,



whereby it becomes possible for that being to do or affect something). The words that he read and wrote were a part of his thinking process, and his thinking process was put on its mettle by the reading and writing.

The new dispensation is not like that. To read the newspaper or watch the tube is to be *distracted* (to distract: to draw apart; pull in different directions and separate), and to write in the mode of the functionally literate is to *submit* to particular functions (submit: to yield; surrender to the power, will, or authority of another). Of course there are always times for distraction and times for submission—they were part of the old literacy too—but when the life of the mind is largely taken over by such times, there is surely something for the accountable ones to worry about.

For such a big takeover, nobody, at least in our culture, can ever be held accountable. We may look for some villain sneaking about in the night distributing double negatives, but we are not allowed to look for the encouragers of verbal indolence and general scatterbrainedness. The Paleys and Grahams would only be amused to be charged. Have they done anything but run successful businesses? Of course not. To ask them to work toward reducing some of the big social-cultural influences of those businesses would be like asking the Mississippi to stop flowing. What to do?

Well, if it is truly reliable functional literacy that we are looking for, I suggest that we turn the whole thing over to the American Greeting Card Company. Over the radio that company filled my ears today with this confident assertion: "Regardless of what you want to say, there's an American greeting card that expresses your sentiments exactly." There, it seems to me, is functional literacy at its best, with the company performing the function for the citizen, and the citizen recognizing that the company expresses him perfectly without his having to do a thing. The media are working toward the same end but this company is way ahead. Perhaps we should make it accountable?

There may be other alternatives. If we were only to recognize and acknowledge the magnitude of the language takeover that has occurred, that would be a start. ☐

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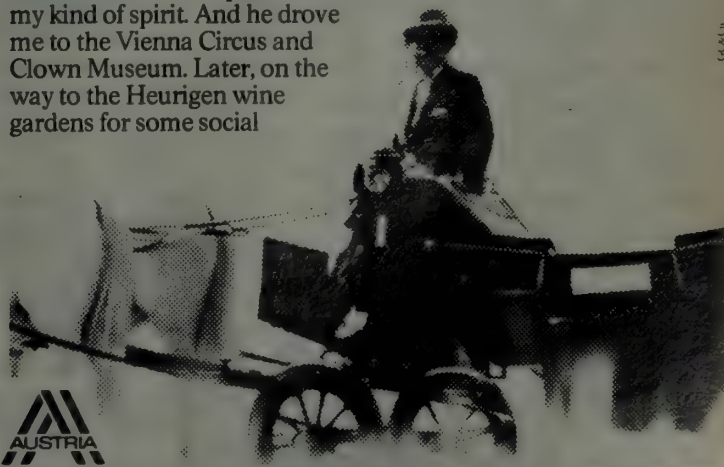
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# OLD COMRADES MEET

European socialists convene to map a political landscape

by Michael Harrington

**I**F POLITICS WERE logical, the Thirteenth Postwar Congress of the Socialist International, held here in late November, should have been one of the more boring nonevents in recent memory. But politics is not logical, and, against all the odds, the congress exhibited unmistakable signs of life.

At the rather advanced age of 112, the International has transformed itself into something quite different from the assemblage of representatives of an outcast proletariat that listened to Karl Marx deliver the inaugural at the founding congress in 1864. Its leaders are men and women who hold government office, and many of them, as socialist executives of capitalism, are accustomed to living inside a contradiction by means of pragmatic compromise. The International is, in effect, a consensus organization. None of the national parties which makes up its membership could take orders from a conference of foreigners, even one that meets in the name of a common, internationalist ideology. At Geneva someone even quoted Paul Henri Spaak's witticism: the only thing the socialists have really nationalized is socialism.

I came to the congress in October with little expectation of dramatic news. In 1959 I had attended a meeting of the International Union of Socialist Youth in West Berlin as a member of the executive committee. It was a fine thing to march down the street behind a sanitation department band playing "The Internationale" or to cast

the vote of "the United States" by virtue of representing about 500 young American socialists. But it was sobering to realize that our most significant act that year was to protest the policy of Guy Mollet's French socialists, who had supported the savage repression of the Algerian national movement.

Things were better in 1963 at a Congress of the International in Amsterdam. There were genuine warmth and leftist *Gemütlichkeit*—a concert at a socialist radio station, a dinner accompanied by feelings of solidarity and much wine—and even hope. At the mass meeting, Harold Wilson spoke enthusiastically of the nationally planned automation which was to open up a new era under the Labor party. But then Wilson took power, and his dogged defense of the pound forced him to pay more attention to the gnomes of Zurich and the bankers of the International Monetary Fund than to the socialist vision he had revealed in Amsterdam.

The 1969 congress was held in Britain, at Eastbourne, the coastal resort where Friedrich Engels's ashes were scattered over the sea. There were some lively discussions of the New Left influence on the political scene, and Jan Tinbergen, that year's Nobel laureate in economics and a member of the Dutch Labor party, spoke about socialism and world poverty. But there was a pall over the proceedings because everyone was convinced that our hosts were about to be voted out of office. I

*Michael Harrington's most recent book is The Twilight of Capitalism.*

do, however, fondly remember going to a luncheon for chairmen of delegations—among them Wilson, Golda Meir, Willy Brandt, and Pietro Nenni—and sitting with some Labor parliamentarians who toasted Gerrard Winstanley, the most left-wing leader of the Puritan revolution, every time the queen's health was proposed.

**S**O I CAME TO Geneva without any romantic hopes, and my first look at the congress site confirmed my lowered expectations. We met in the modernistic office building of the International Labor Organization in a striking room with nicely cushioned seats and with paintings which, the official congress poster said, protested the crippling of humanity. But even though the atmosphere seemed depressingly bourgeois, there were signs that something new and different was about to take place. The traditional social democratic women's conference ended with a meeting at which a leading Belgian woman socialist told the audience that there were "kilos of resolutions" in favor of sexual equality in the European socialist movement, but little action. And when Léopold Senghor's party was admitted to membership—the first African affiliate—a Senegalese dance group swirled down the aisles. There were portents.

It was not just that Willy Brandt, who strolled the floor of the congress with the charismatic calm of a Buddha, was elected the new chairman of the International. Indeed, Brandt had



esisted the nomination, agreeing to  
ake the job only after receiving as-  
urances that the organization would  
ake an attempt to include the Third  
World. A number of other topics on  
he agenda suggested the possibility of  
ovement and change. There was a de-  
ided, if cautious, openness to the idea  
hat "Eurocommunists" may be mov-  
ng in a democratic direction; a unan-  
mous, but hardheaded endorsement of  
etente; and unmistakable signs of  
minist influence which challenged the  
male dominance of the International.

But the Third World issue was the  
great point of departure at Geneva, the  
reason for treating the congress as a  
erious event. For one thing, there was  
a great deal of candid self-criticism.  
The International, Brandt said, was in  
danger of becoming a "socialist gen-  
lemen's club" and had to face up to  
he "genocide of misery" which was  
occurring daily in the poor nations.  
Another speaker at a small meeting  
talked of breaking out of "the ghetto  
of Europe" (whereupon a British La-  
borite muttered, "But why did you  
pressure us so hard to join the ghet-  
o?"). President Senghor told of a  
39 percent deterioration in his econ-  
omy's terms of trade. So the Interna-  
tional, representing the left wing of a  
routed capitalist affluence, decided  
o reach out to the prisoners of star-  
vation.

That is easier voted in a resolution  
n Geneva than done. Part of the prob-  
em has to do with ideology. Democ-  
racy is essential for the delegates to  
he International, who long ago reject-  
ed the socialist claims of Communist—  
or any other—dictatorships. Yet the  
parties of the Third World which call  
hemselves socialist are, with a few ex-  
ceptions such as Senegal, authoritarian.  
At best, the governments of those coun-  
tries represent the yearnings for social  
justice where the economic and social  
conditions of political freedom do not  
exist; at worst, they exploit the year-  
nings of their people in order to main-  
tain a structure sometimes taken over  
ntact from the colonialists. Are they  
'nondemocratic socialists," as Dom  
Mintoff, the prime minister of Malta,  
called them? That, according to the  
International's ideology, is a contra-  
diction in terms.

The political problems inherent in  
he contradiction were reflected in the  
discussions about a number of author-



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itarian parties in the Arab world that call themselves socialist. Austria's socialist chancellor (and one of Brandt's mentors from their days in Swedish exile during World War II), Bruno Kreisky, had recently led a delegation from the International to the Middle East. If, he said, political changes are the consequence of changes in production, then these nations will undergo great transformations in the coming period. Socialists, he concluded, cannot isolate themselves from that process. At a minimum, they must attempt to communicate with these anomalous movements.

Unfortunately, the Arab parties are bent on destroying the homeland of one of the members of the International, the Israeli Labor party. That was emphasized by a meeting which took place in Barcelona at the same time as the Geneva congress. A Mediterranean Socialist Conference, organized by the Spaniards, the Maltese, and the Libyans—the latter championing something called Islamic socialism—seated a group from the Palestine Liberation Organization. The PLO spokesman, a member of the Libyan faction of his organization, advocated sending the Israeli Jews back to their native countries. Meanwhile, back in Geneva, many of the delegates were particularly impressed by the Israelis' willingness to take chances for a permanent peace.

**M**IDDLE EASTERN politics, then, complicate the socialists' new turn to the Third World. So does the economic crisis in the West. Helmut Schmidt lived up to his reputation as an abrasive politician and, in the process, made a major contribution to the congress. His opening premise was unassailable: that there will be no new international economics unless the advanced countries put their own houses in order. But then he went on to attack the notion that the current recession has anything to do with capitalism and argued that the real cause was inflationary government spending—and often government spending on social programs; we might have been listening to Arthur Burns with a German accent.

Schmidt's neoconservative sally livened up the debates because everyone rushed to answer him. Bruno Kreisky avowed that he was no left-winger but

then said he was not afraid to identify the capitalist sources of the present troubles. Yarom Peri, an Israeli, argued that the problem is not, as some on the Right think in the wake of recent socialist electoral losses, that socialism is collapsing. Rather, the illusion of a conflict-free capitalism, with effortless growth, rising living standards, and traditional class structures, is falling apart. The people, Peri said, are bewildered by this sudden shift in the postwar reality and they turn to the opposition, whether it is left or right—to the bourgeois parties in Sweden, to the Socialist party in France. What this means, he concluded, is that socialists must reformulate their programs and begin thoroughgoing structural changes. Brandt himself endorsed Peri's call for ideological redefinition.

But supposing that the current crisis is resolved, do the socialists really propose to use a renewed prosperity on behalf of the world's poor? Pavo Lipomen of Finland spoke about that usually unmentionable point. It will be necessary, he held, to go to the voters and convince them that their standard of living must grow more slowly if justice is to be done to the Third World. Joop M. den Uyl, prime minister of the Netherlands and a man who communicates a Brandt-like sense of integrity and decency, argued that free trade in the world today is freedom for the rich, a means of corporate domination of the global economy.

The most pointed comments were those of Michel Rocard of France. Rocard's very presence in Geneva, as a leading member of François Mitterrand's delegation, was itself something of a revelation. For years after World War II, French socialism was dominated by Guy Mollet, a parliamentary politician of the Fourth Republic. Mitterrand and Rocard both broke with Mollet on the issue of the Algerian war, and Rocard became the head of the Marxist United Socialist party. Now that Mollet is gone, Mitterrand is in a good position to become the next prime minister of France, and if that happens Rocard will probably be a Cabinet minister. More to the present point, a very traditional French socialist movement which suffered through a generation of decline has been replaced by a growing and active party with new, young leaders.

Indeed, the very language Rocard

used at the International was an innovation. He spoke of the problem of "unequal exchange" between the rich and poor countries, a reference to a neo-Marxist theory of imperialism which has been developed by French and Third World thinkers. He came out squarely for planned reorganization of world commodity markets and in a proposal which would make strong men in the U.S. State Department weep, urged that international financial institutions have their power apportioned on the basis of population rather than wealth.

Rocard also introduced some Gallic candor. The resolution on the Third World was, he said, "mediocre and sloppy," but since it represented at least a beginning of an interest in the Third World, he and his delegation would vote for it. That, I think, was and is the right tone to take. Anyone familiar with modern socialist history, particularly with all the failures that followed after the parties of the International betrayed their antiwar principles in 1914, cannot possibly expect even a delayed millennium. Within my own limited experience, I remembered how taken I was with Harold Wilson's bold words in Amsterdam in 1963 and how disappointed I was when they did not come to pass.

And yet, I cannot help hoping. In the past I have said and written that the principal distinction between a liberal American trade unionist and his socialist counterpart in Europe consisted of a different rhetoric. Both, I thought, were committed to planned full employment, the welfare state, and other government interventions. Now I think otherwise. The socialists in Geneva can define problems that most of their American labor counterparts cannot even see. The presence of an ideology—however attenuated and compromised it may be—allows the European socialist to speak about something other than immediate reforms. More than that, Brandt and company have a sense of global solidarity which has specifically socialist roots. "The Internationale" is a hymn to all the wretched of the earth, and that sentiment survives in these men and women more than I knew. I do not know whether they will be able to act effectively upon that emotion. But they have decided to try, and that is why the Geneva congress triumphed over the auguries of dullness. □



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# THOUGHTS FROM THE DAIS

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## On receiving an honorary award

by Samuel C. Florman

WHAT AM I doing here? Why am I seated on the dais in a hall where I have never been before, looking out over a dinner crowd of 400 people, not one of whom I had ever met when I arrived here an hour ago?

To my left sits a young woman, the wife of the president of the alumni association, and beyond her the president of the institute itself. Yes, this is a respected engineering college, that much I know, and we are present at the annual alumni banquet. To my right sits the wife of the other honoree. Ah, yes, the other honoree. I am here to receive an award of honor.

Four months ago the letter arrived:

*Each year the Alumni Association of the Institute honors one or more outstanding leaders in science, engineering, or government by conferring upon those duly selected the Honor Award and Medal. . . . We would be pleased if you would allow us to bestow the Honor Award upon you this year. Presentation of the Award would be made at our Annual Alumni Banquet.*

Then came the follow-up telephone calls. Would I accept? Why, yes, with pleasure. Will my wife come with me? I'm sure she'd be delighted. Would I please send in a brief biography and a photo for the alumni newsletter? Of course. Is this the way you would like your name engraved on the medallion? Fine. One more question. Will you be willing to make a few remarks to the assembled guests? Just five or ten minutes. Well, I guess so.

The weeks passed. All of a sudden it was yesterday and I was struggling to get down in writing a few words from the hundred speeches I had given in my

head since the arrival of the invitation. I feel a fleeting panic, and quickly reach inside the breast pocket of my jacket. The folded papers are still there. My remarks. Will they be too long or too short, too ponderous, too flippant? What do these people expect?

Just an hour ago my wife, Judy, and I drove onto the campus, were greeted by a waiting escort, ushered into a large reception room, and handed drinks. The president and his wife came over to meet us, affable and solicitous. We talked about cats and the cost of higher education. Then there were other hands to shake, pleasantries to exchange, names to repeat and forget. Just before the designated dinner hour, the director of alumni affairs descended upon us, accompanied by a photographer and assistants. I found myself posing for pictures, smiling awkwardly into that middle distance somewhere between the eyes of my fellow posers and the eye of the camera. Then in a flurry of excitement the dignitaries were lined up, and we paraded—there is no other word for it—through the dining hall, amongst the assembled crowd, up onto the dais. I had barely sat down when we were all on our feet singing “The Star-Spangled Banner.” A clergyman gave an invocation, someone introduced each of us at the head table, and we were finally free to start in on the melon.

WHAT AM I doing here? I lean back and look down to the other end of the dais, catching Judy's eye. She smiles wanly as if to say, “Why aren't we home, or in a little French restaurant, or at the mov-

ies?” Then I see her in conversation with my fellow honoree, a distinguished engineer, vice-president of a major oil company, with a list of degrees, honors, and inventions as long as the table. His wife, to my right, asks me about my children. She speaks with a graciousness compounded of executive-suite self-assurance and a delectable Louisiana accent. Her husband is an important man who has contributed much to our profession, and also happens to be a trustee of this institution. But why am I here?

I am here because I have written a couple of books and a bunch of articles which treat engineering from a “philosophical” point of view. Someone on the award selection committee must have read some of my work and liked it. Very nice. But—let us face facts—that is not the *real* reason.

To uncover the real reason we must start with the committee that plans this dinner each year and tries to make it a success. It is not easy to make much of an event out of an annual alumni banquet at an engineering college. Yet the committee must try, year after year. The alumni must be brought together for the sake of camaraderie, to help each other's careers, and, most important, to ensure continuing loyalty and financial support for alma mater.

Imagine the hapless committee, charged with planning the evening, trying to add some interest to the program. Who can they invite? Consider for a moment the mathematics of the situation. There are more than 200 accredited engineering colleges, and one with its dinners, seminars, and other assorted festivities. That is just the

*Samuel C. Florman is the author of The Existential Pleasures of Engineering*





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### THOUGHTS FROM THE DAIS

beginning. There are engineering clubs in practically every city. There are about fifty national engineering societies, most with numerous committees and technical subdivisions, and all with local chapters across the country. The American Society of Civil Engineers alone, with only 70,000 members, supports more than 400 national committees, and more than 200 regional sections and branches, most with technical groups and committees of their own. There are at least 5,000 such engineering units in the nation, some of them meeting each month. There must be at least 10,000 engineering meetings each year, many of them featuring speakers, guests, moderators, panelists, and honorees. Now, consider that there are only 1 million engineers in the whole country, 100 per scheduled meeting. This means that, with an average of one speaker per event, any one engineer, over his fifty-year career, stands a 50 percent chance of being called upon! And this does not even take into account all the charitable, religious, political, and social affairs in which engineers participate.

So the committee has a problem. The few famous engineers are over-invited, overhonored, and overexposed. And since most of the merely distinguished engineers are not exactly show-biz attractions, the committee's problem becomes more acute. I have been on such committees myself, and I know what they are like.

**T** BEGIN TO feel angry, realizing that I am here because of a time-worn, almost meaningless custom. Some member of the planning committee said, "Let's invite this guy who wrote a book," and everyone else thought, "Terrific! One less problem to worry about." I am a fundraising gimmick, a necessary component of dinner, like the melon being removed and the steak being served.

The steak, as it turns out, is excellent, but I continue to brood. Soon dessert and coffee are served, and once again I check the papers in my pocket. But my time is not yet. Not nearly yet. The president of the alumni association is at the microphone making jovial remarks. Then the president of the institute talks about rising costs, nearly balanced budgets, high morale, and firm resolve.

Now it is time for the awards. But not mine. First the Fiftieth Anniversary Awards for members of the class of 1926. Next an award for the past president of the alumni association. Then certificates of appreciation for six of the institute's trustees. The outpouring of praise and gratitude swells to a crescendo as the Alumni Award is given to a member of the class of 1939 who has been in the institute's administration for these many years.

Finally, the honor awards. The other honoree receives his first. Now I am standing, listening to the awards chairman tell all these strangers who I am, where I went to school. . . . I am being handed a silver medallion, and I hear applause. It is time for my remarks.

I step up to the lectern, and haltingly begin to speak, about engineering, about what the profession means to those of us who are engineers, and what I think it means to mankind. I look out across the host of unfamiliar faces. They are politely attentive. One elderly man appears to be smiling, and—is it my imagination?—nods encouragingly. "You are among friends," I imagine him saying. "Anyone who cares for our profession is welcome in this place." Our profession. Of course. I am no stranger here.

Suddenly I am filled with a feeling of warm comradeship. The anger of a few minutes ago has vanished. So what if the proceedings are trite and a little ridiculous? We are here to express allegiance to our profession, our respect for learning, and our commitment to constructive works.

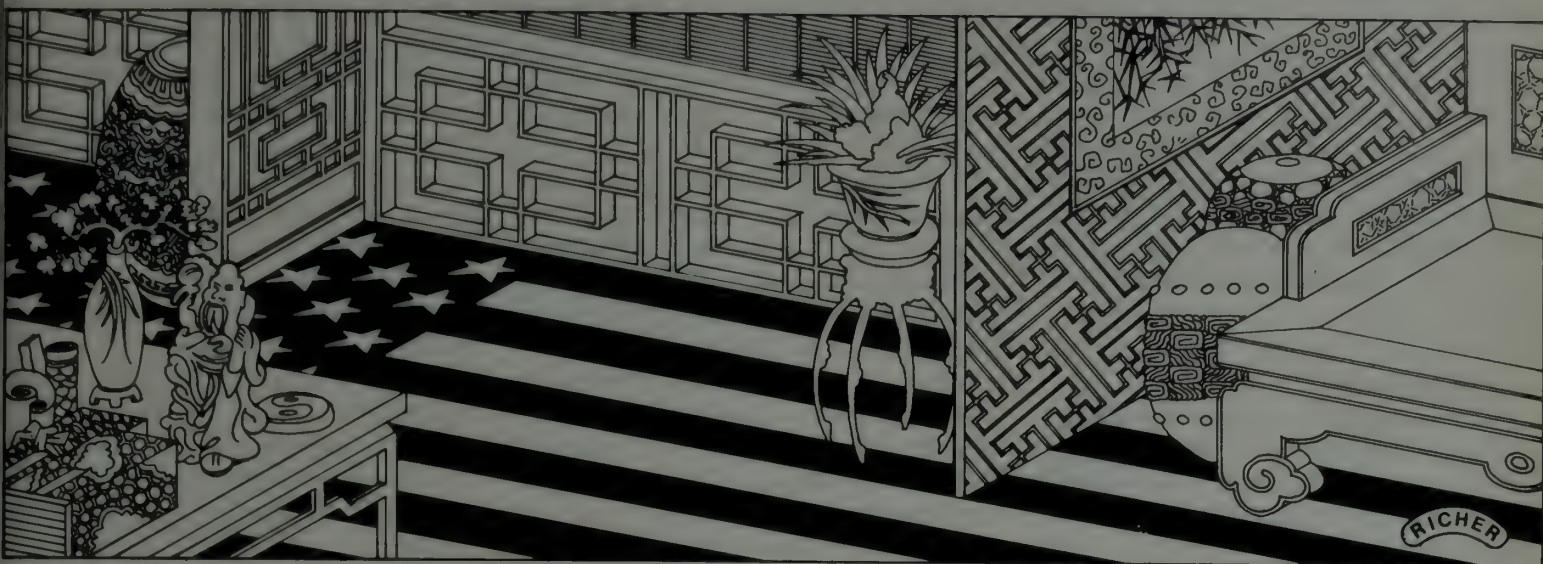
How else, after all, are we to demonstrate to each other our regard for shared values except through rituals such as this banquet? Of course the custom becomes stale. But would it be better if we had no banquets and awarded no prizes?

I have concluded my remarks, and my fellow engineers have applauded again. Thank you, my friends. We are standing, singing the school song. The words are printed in the banquet program, and by the second verse I find myself joining in.

*Though years our paths may sever  
And best of friends may part  
We'll ne'er forget fond memories  
Treasured within the heart.*

The moment is as ridiculous as the song, and as wonderful. □





# MAO'S FUNERAL

Eminent Americans pay their respects to a successful enemy

by Ben J. Wattenberg

**S**OMETHING IS out of joint and I am troubled. Here is the Great Hall of the People—a resplendent, massive, Mussolini-style building in the middle of Peking, sure enough the capital of the People's Republic of China, purest Communist nation on the face of the earth. Inside the Great Hall on this strange September day are the last earthly remains of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the most revered Communist of the twentieth century.

We are going up the stairs of the Great Hall. By design of protocol we follow close on the heels of some of the world's great democrats and civil libertarians. There are the Albanians! And the North Koreans! And our good friends the North Vietnamese. And there go the Cambodians, those fine peasant reformers whose latest reform involved mass transit—the sudden movement of 2.5 million residents of Phnom Penh into the steamy depths of the Asian jungle.

Just behind these idealists, and in front of the rest of the world diplomatic community, we go up the stairs and

on into the Great Hall. Here is James Schlesinger, one of the outstanding American public servants of this generation—anti-Communist, hard-line, realistic Jim Schlesinger, who thought Ford and Kissinger were soft on détente. In the party with him is Richard Perle, a senior foreign-policy aide to Sen. Henry Jackson—Scoop Jackson, who probably never became President because he was regarded by elements in his party as too viscerally anti-Communist. And there is Robert Bartley, editor of the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal*, one of the foremost daily pages in American journalism, and one that consistently exercises rigorous surveillance over the cause of freedom in the world. I am wondering as I go up the stairs, Whom does Bartley line up with in American politics? Probably Reagan. There is Edward Luttwak, a former consultant to the Department of Defense when Schlesinger was Secretary. Luttwak writes on foreign policy for *Commens-*

*tary* magazine, which surely qualifies as one of the American periodicals least hospitable to Communism. And here am I. I've worked with Senator Jackson on two Presidential campaigns and occasionally with Daniel P. Moynihan during his recent Senate campaign. I live in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, but if I lived across the river, in the Virginia suburbs, I'd surely have worked for and voted for Adm. Elmo Zumwalt in his recent, unsuccessful try for elective office. A few years ago I helped form a factional group within the Democratic party called the Coalition for a Democratic Majority. CDM has devoted much of its time and attention to foreign policy and national defense and has received solid support from the AFL-CIO. It comes to mind in the present context that George Meany has sometimes expressed the opinion that Scoop Jackson is a little soft on Communism.

Up the stairs we go.

We are all wearing black armbands. We are all wearing black ties—except me, and that is only because someone forgot to include me in the body count

*Ben Wattenberg, author of The Real America, is essayist and narrator of the PBS program In Search of the Real America.*



## MAO'S FUNERAL

before the tie-buying detail went out to the Friendship Store.

Into the Great Hall we go, across a massive marble arcade. A thousand floral wreaths surround the arcade. The smell of incense wafts along the air-conditioned currents. A slow dirge booms out, hitting its own echo.

Our party, led by Schlesinger, is greeted by a small receiving line of eight people. The first is a pudgy man who does not look familiar to me, although the columnist Joe Kraft and Jerrold Schecter, *Time's* diplomatic editor, seem to be studying him closely as we approach.

The pudgy man is Hua Kuo-feng, the premier, soon to replace Chairman Mao as head of the Central Committee. The other men are seven of the ten members of the Politburo of the Chinese Communist party. One Politburo member not present is Chiang Ching, Mao's widow.

We shake hands, nod solemnly, and proceed to Mao's bier.

His catafalque is encased in glass; a scarlet flag with the hammer and sickle on it is draped over his large and portly body. Mao Tse-tung. Dead.

In a moment, we leave. As we pass a group of Chinese, we hear sobs.

I am not grieving. A single thought keeps running through my mind.

What are we doing here? What is Schlesinger doing here? What are the Jackson-Moynihan-Zumwalt-Reagan-Meany surrogates doing here? Why are we wearing solemn black?

**O**STENSIBLY WE ARE HERE because Jim Schlesinger believes that it is the Russians, not the Chinese, who are the greater threat to world peace and stability. He believes this because he has made a point of knowing the difference between booby-trapped chicken coops of the sort the Chinese military so proudly displayed for us and 2,400 nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles. Schlesinger is a man who usually speaks his mind, making him no friend of Henry Kissinger, who doesn't, but building for himself a constituency throughout the world, including China. In order to show symbolically that they had in Washington a man who saw the Russians as they did, some months ago the Chinese invited Schlesinger to come and visit.

The invitation, we were told in China, had come at the instance of Mao himself. (We were also told that two previous invitations had been issued in 1974, but Schlesinger says he never received them, and the public guessing is that they were intercepted by a pudgy man with curly hair and glasses.)

Schlesinger, when invited by the Chinese, set down some conditions. What he could learn on a quick trip to Peking, he said, he could learn from briefings in the U.S. On the other hand, if he could really get to see the country as any curious American would want to—a trip to the Russian border in Sinkiang, a trip to Inner Mongolia, a visit to Tibet—why, then he would be interested indeed.

The Chinese came back with a simple answer: yes. And so our party of eleven (five staff, six press) ended up in Peking. On our third day there, just as we were leaving a military demonstration by the Third Army Garrison Division north of Peking, we suddenly heard the strains of the "Internationale" blaring from a loudspeaker, and we were told that the chairman had expired.

Four days later we are mounting the stairs of the Great Hall of the People to pay our last respects, and we are very near the front of the line so the Chinese can send both the Russians and Dr. Kissinger a message. (Thomas Gates, himself a former U.S. Secretary of Defense, is the head of the U.S. Liaison Office in Peking. Protocol dictates that he pay his respects last. He does, and, ironically, the high dignitaries are gone by the time he passes the bier.)

So what is bothering me? What troubles me about this black armband?

We are, after all, guests in a great nation where a legendary leader has fallen. Moreover, as a result of the curious vicissitudes of recent history, the United States and China are almost allies; at least we acknowledge that we are pursuing parallel interests in the great game of big-power triangulation. So, we and other Americans are in China because strategic interests demand it. We are at Mao's bier in black armbands because courtesy requires it.

But what really bothers me is what I see of life in China. Every year the widely respected organization Freedom House makes a two-part survey of the

nations of the world. On a descending scale of one to seven it rates their performance in the areas of "civil rights" and "political rights." China gets seven in both areas. The Soviet Union does slightly better, with six and seven respectively. In barely seven days of travel I have learned enough about China to confirm in my own mind the accuracy of the Freedom House rating and to understand what formerly only assumed:

- ☐ The government (the party) decrees what kind of clothing (drab and colorless) can be worn.
- ☐ The government decrees that sexuality is bad.
- ☐ The government decrees that each block of each city will have a political commissar to spy on the neighbors.
- ☐ The government decrees a semi-official age for marriage—in the late twenties.
- ☐ The government decrees that there can be no entertainment, only propaganda.

To these austere codes, peculiarly Chinese, must be added the standard conception of freedom in a Communist paradise:

- ☐ No free press
- ☐ No free job mobility
- ☐ No free trade-union movement
- ☐ No rights of travel or emigration
- ☐ No tolerance of public political opposition

And, despite the picture presented in the American press, China, for all its progress, is still a desperately poor backward, peasant economy—a fact which is not even argued by the Chinese. One sees it in the countryside where work gangs of thirty or forty people ("revolutionary teams") work at stoop labor in the paddy fields beneath the hot sun, just as their ancestors did. One sees it in the urban neighborhoods when you can glance into ground-floor apartments and see one tiny room for a three-generation family with pallets stacked two and three deep along the walls.

On the whole, despite all the huzzas to Chinese progress, it is probably right to say that on the postwar scale of development China is somewhere in the middle: it has not done as well as Brazil, Mexico, Taiwan, South Korea, or the Ivory Coast, but it has done better than India, Burma, and most of the African nations.



**P**OVERTY, OR moderate economic progress is, of course, no measure of the beneficence of a regime. But when the method of achieving only moderate progress turns out to depend for its success upon such severe repression, is it appropriate to ask, Does the material progress justify the spiritual cost?

This question, I have found, is typically bypassed in the West with such pronouncements as: "Well, of course, it's not something we'd want for ourselves, but it's a good Chinese solution for the Chinese."

A Chinese solution for the Chinese: wear the same clothes, spy on your neighbors, think the same thoughts, read the same propaganda, do what you're told. A Chinese solution indeed! Or one of the world's great cultures! Was Stalinism a Russian solution for the Russians? Was Nazism a German solution for the Germans? Was Tojo a Japanese solution for the Japanese? Is General Pinochet a Chilean solution for the Chileans?

There is high irony in hearing the same people who, a few years ago, thought putting funny hats on the White House police a major step toward tyranny argue that Maoism is just a Chinese solution for Chinese problems.

Why, then, must we worry about the nature of life in China? What business is it of ours?

Only this. How do you forge a freedom coalition if American Presidents and an American Secretary of State, American intellectuals and writers compete to be the first among their friends to eat bird's nest soup in Peking and make political love in public to one of the most repressive governments in the world?

There has been a great brush-fire of ideology going on in America over the past half-dozen years. What that Moynihan once called the Liberty Party has shown signs of stirring again. It has reappeared in various guises: now it is a Jackson Amendment for free emigration from the Soviet Union. Now it is Moynihan at the United Nations, or Solchenitsyn, using forums provided by George Meany. Later it becomes Meany's arch-adversary Ronald Reagan speaking in Kansas City on the issue of morality in foreign policy. And it is

the remarkable change in public opinion that leads politicians suddenly to begin clamoring for higher defense spending. And it is Jimmy Carter in the second campaign debate saying in his opening non-answer that he endorses the Republican platform's foreign-policy plank! It is Gerald Ford's pollsters discovering that the issue described as "traditional American values" was the most important issue of the 1976 campaign.

Americans seem to lust for meaning in their lives, and in political life that meaning is somehow tied to the promotion and preservation of liberty. I'd suggest that the resurrection of a commitment to liberty—mildly messianic and nonjingoistic in tone—is far more important than the size of the defense budget, than the specific resolution of the SALT talks, than whether we pursue parallelism with Chairman Hua.

This is not a plea for dissociating ourselves from China. The Schlesinger journey had its rewarding moments. Schlesinger himself has become a useful link between two great powers. In that sense as well as others, he is a national resource.

But carefully, friends, carefully. Careful in optics, careful in cosmetics. Strategic and moral claims are rarely identical. Distinctions must be drawn—and with Nixon, Ford, and Kissinger so recently in Peking, the American press beatifying Mao, and the apologetics offered by Mao's fans and followers, I know that we still have some discriminating to do. It is a devilish question, of course: morality or strategy. What I am saying is that the essential strategy is morality.

**A**FTER MAO'S FUNERAL we get into cars and go back to our hotel. I am wondering how the New York *Daily News* headline writers will handle Mao's death. "Big Red Bites Dust" comes to mind. This kind of silliness has sustained our group through this journey so far, and without humor our days would be difficult. When we reach the lobby of the hotel Richard Perle comes up to me with a sly grin on his face. "Well," he says, "dead fellows make strange politics." It is one of the few lines I've heard in a week that makes sense. ☐

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# THE SPECTER OF FULL EMPLOYMENT

A secure working class threatens the principles of capitalism

by Robert Lekachman

**A**S WE EMBARK ON Year One of the Carter Era, it is perhaps permissible to wistfully recall that its chronological predecessor was the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. To postpone anticlimax no further, 1976 was also the thirtieth birthday of the Employment Act of 1946.

Antiquarians can testify that the new statute was the emasculated survivor of the Full Employment Bill of 1945, which threatened concrete action against unemployment. All that the Employment Act specifically did was create the Council of Economic Advisers and the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, two of Washington's more talkative and less influential groups. The act's wordy preamble did, it is true, promise something called "maximum employment," but it never paused to explain what that might be and how it was to be attained.

Since 1946 we have staggered through a couple of recessions courtesy of Harry Truman, three sponsored by Dwight Eisenhower, and two conferred upon their countrypersons by Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. During the 1950s, which those of hazy recollection now glorify as a veritable Golden Age, unemployment averaged around 5 percent and

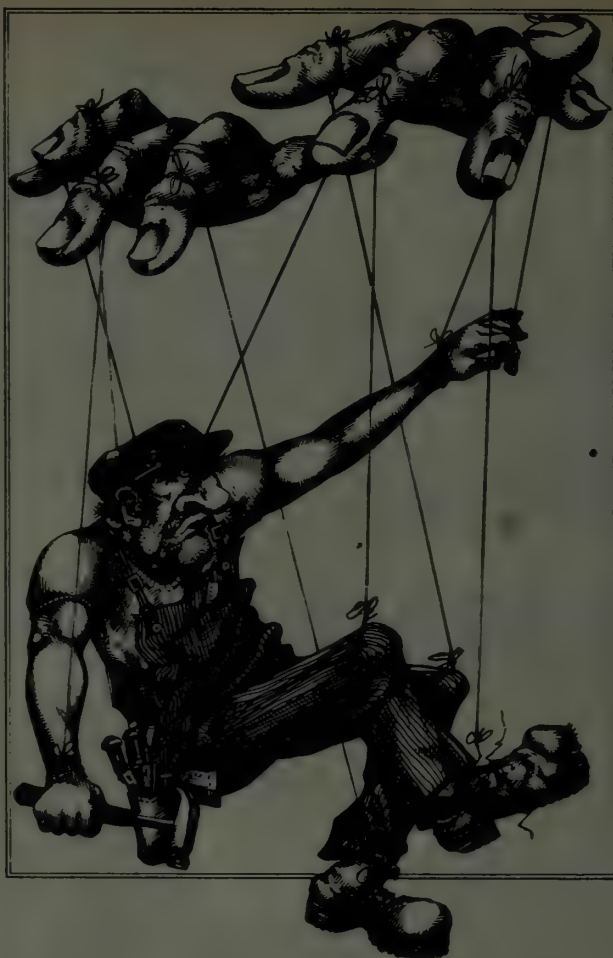
general economic growth lagged enough to provide a winning issue for John Kennedy in 1960. A combination of Kennedy-Johnson tax cuts, subsidies to the Pentagon, the war on poverty, and, not least, the Vietnam public works program, turned the 1960s into a better than average decade for jobs. In the 1970s things are back to normal or worse.

This abbreviated business history does call attention to a puzzle, at least for the naive. For thirty years it has been declared national policy to run the economy rapidly enough to give every American willing and able to work at a job roughly commensurate with his or her skills if not expectations. All political candidates extol the work ethic and dutifully recall hard boyhoods spent jerking sodas, shining shoes, delivering newspapers, or digging up peanuts. In the course of the late, unlamented Presidential campaign, Carter was no less eager than Ford to get people off welfare rolls onto payrolls, to recall the felicitous language of the departed Nixon. Certainly no shortage looms of things to be done and goods and services to be supplied. A community whose median income hovers around \$14,000 and in which average families are noticeably worse off than they were two or three years ago, has not lost interest in getting more income to buy cars, houses, and vacations in the sunny South or the snowy North.

Robert Lekachman is Distinguished Professor of Economics at Herbert Lehman College of the City University of New York. He is the author of *Economic Bay*.



Robert  
Lekachman  
**THE SPECTER  
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EMPLOYMENT**



### The uses of unemployment

**M**EN AND WOMEN want to work. Work, private and public, is there to be done. How come, a wandering rationalist might ask, the work and the workers are not happily married? Well, as the radicals of my youth were wont to intone, it is no accident that we tolerate as a nation years of 7, 8, even 9 percent general unemployment and horrifying rates of teen-age joblessness which among urban blacks exceed, by some estimates, 50 percent.

The brutal fact is that unemployment at "moderate" rates confers a good many benefits upon the prosperous and the truly affluent. If everyone could be employed, extraordinarily high wages would have to be paid to toilers in restaurant kitchens, laundries, filling stations, and other humble positions. Whenever decent jobs at living wages are plentiful, it is exceedingly difficult to coax young men and women into our volunteer army. Without a volunteer army, how can the children of the middle and upper classes be spared the rigors of the draft?

Unemployment calms the unions and moderates their wage demands. Business periodicals have been noting with unconcealed gratification that last year's contract settlements

between major unions and large corporations were considerably less expensive for employers than those of 1975, even though union members were steadily losing ground to inflation. When people are scared about losing their jobs, they work harder and gripe less. In more dignified language, absenteeism declines and productivity ascends.

Better still, factory and office workers, alert to potential layoffs and plant shutdowns, are unlikely to nag unions and employers to make work more interesting, and less menacing to health and personal safety. It cannot be mere coincidence that in Sweden, where job enrichment and plant democracy have had their greatest success, unemployment is practically zero and astute management of their economy protected Swedes even from the worldwide economic crisis of 1973-75. The new government, elected on the fortuitous issue of nuclear safety, has promised to extend even further the social benefits for which Sweden has become celebrated. American employers preserve themselves from Swedish experiments in good part by keeping the industrial reserve army plentifully manned.

Nor is this quite the end of the tale. The hunger of communities and regions for jobs and tax revenues has allowed large corporations to extort an endless assortment of valuable concessions from local and state governments, either as blackmail to keep existing installations or bribes to lure new ones. Few major corporations pay their fair share of property taxes. Propaganda by oil, steel, chemical, and paper industries has noticeably slowed the pace of regulation to protect the environment. Leonard Woodcock, who knows better, has allied himself with the major auto companies in seeking to postpone the application of the next wave of auto standards, entirely out of concern for the jobs of his UAW constituents.

By contrast, full employment on a sustained and assured basis (the system can stand a spell of full employment so long as all parties understand that it is temporary) presents an embarrassment to the movers and shapers of American plutocracy. To begin with, full employment is the most efficient agent of equitable income redistribution which is at all politically feasible in the United States. Full employment sucks into the labor force men and women who now struggle on welfare, food stamps, Social Security, and unemployment compensation. It pushes up the wages of low-paid people whose position is scarcely less precarious than that of the unemployed. It is an especial boon to blacks, Hispanics, teen-agers, and women—last hired and first fired in ex-







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employers gladly cooperated with Washington to police the wage-rise limits. Seldom did patriotism pay better.

The fact is that in the United States (England is, of course, quite a different matter) mandatory price controls over concentrated industries and the health sector, together with voluntary wage guidelines, would probably work very well for a time. American unions are, after all, both weak and conservative. The path to full employment without inflation is impassible without a firm incomes policy and the statutory authorization of price controls administered by individuals who believe in what they are doing.

Does the political will to shape a national full employment policy exist? It is difficult to answer yes to that question. Last year full employment struck a Democratic Congress as sufficiently radical to bury Humphrey-Hawkins. For, as has been noted, full employment means diminishing long-standing inequalities of income, wealth, and power; inviting the black, brown, young, and female to the American celebration; and controlling the rapacity of doctors, lawyers, giant corporations, and other reputable extortionists. After full employment who will iron Russell Long's shirts, clean up after the Lutèce diners, and do the world's dirty work? Settle the job issue once and for all, and even American unions will begin to entertain dangerous thoughts about job redesign, codetermination, and similarly radical Swedish and German nonsense.

The fine Christian (and occasionally Jewish) men whom the good Lord has placed in the seats of authority and the halls of the mighty know that there are far worse phenomena than unemployment. One of them is full employment.

**J**OBS WERE THE MOST frequently reiterated of Carter's campaign themes and the President's squeak to victory required essential aid from blacks, Chicanos in Texas, the AFL-CIO, and aggrieved New Yorkers persuaded that Ford, not the *Daily News* headline writer (a great man), had actually told their city to drop dead. The ingratitude of Presidents is as notorious as that of princes, so there is no certainty that the new Chief Executive will automatically move toward genuine full employment, as distinguished from the moderate stimulation of a quick tax cut. Carter cautiously, reluctantly, and belatedly endorsed Humphrey-Hawkins, in the wake of his ethnic-purity blunder. He repeatedly emphasized his preference for job creation in the private sec-

tor and his desire to avoid expanding the weight of federal activity. At that famous luncheon at 21 for Henry Ford II and the corporate heavyweights, Carter promised that he would study the tax code a year or so before making recommendations for revision to Congress—the same tax code that he had described before less affluent audiences as a disgrace to civilization.

Nevertheless, there is some reason to believe that Carter will pursue more expansionary tax and spending policies than did his predecessor. Even businessmen who mistook the vote for Ford are concerned about the continued sluggishness of the economy. When retail sales falter, profits are threatened and the long-awaited boom in investment never occurs. It appears that the "pause," "lull," or just plain old recession has gone further and lasted longer than is needed to serve the laudable purposes which unemployment serves.

A genuine commitment to sustained full employment demands a good deal more than a temporary tax cut or a brief loosening of federal purse strings. The United States must move toward a coherent high-employment economy at the same time as it becomes politically feasible to diminish the power of great wealth and reduce inequalities of income and wealth.

The fate of George McGovern in 1972 and Fred Harris in 1976, two brave souls who stepped to the perils of open discussion of such political dynamite, makes it depressingly plain that Americans continue to admire the people's institutions that make life harder for them than it need be. As Prof. Walter Burnham at MIT pointed out last year, the missing 45 percent of the American electorate who don't turn up on Election Day in Europe vote Labor, Socialist, or Communist.

All my life my country has suffered from the absence of a significant political Left. As I trudge through middle age toward the golden years of senior citizenship, I glimpse even less hope of the emergence of a democratic socialist party than I did during the late 1930s and early 1940s when, at least in Manhattan, revolution was in the air.

Until a credible left rises in the United States, unemployment will be a little higher when the Republicans are in the White House and a little lower when the Democrats take the turn. Genuine full employment, decent jobs at decent wages for every man, woman, and youth interested in working, has been a myth, is a myth, and will stay a myth so long as every four years voters choose between a party minimally to the right of dead center and a second minimally to the left.

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# REVISING THE FACTS OF LIFE

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A framework for modern biology

by P. B. and J. S. Medawar

very few weeks, it seems, the front pages of newspapers announce startling medical or biological discoveries. Our response usually reflects our pragmatism. When these advances are of obvious benefit to mankind, perhaps because they prolong life or ease suffering, we readily appreciate them and take note of their discovery with approval, even gratitude. Experimental research that may lead to major breakthroughs, but as yet has only potential application (such as the recombinant DNA experiments now being conducted), we tend to treat with scepticism. Increasingly, however, our response to news from the biological front is bafflement. Most of us lack an understanding that enables us to place discoveries in perspective, or even to place them within the framework in which they belong.

*The following compendium of information is intended to provide this perspective. These are excerpts from a forthcoming book, The Life Science: Current Ideas of Biology, by P.B. and J.S. Medawar. The subjects included here are heredity, evolution, eugenics, molecular biology, immunology, cancer, and senescence. A glossary of biological terms may be found on page 60.*

*Peter Medawar is former professor of zoology at London and Birmingham Universities. He was director of the British National Institute for Medical Research from 1962 to 1971. In 1960 he received the Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine. His wife and coauthor, Jean Medawar, is director of the Margaret Pyke Trust and a Trustee of the International Institute for Environment and Development.*

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## God and the Geneticists

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NOT SO VERY MANY years ago people talked about "God and the physicists," but today the geneticists have elbowed their way to the footlights, and a great change has come about in relations between science and religion: the physicists were in the main very well disposed towards God, but the geneticists are not.

It is upon the notion of *randomness* that geneticists have based their case against a benevolent or malevolent deity and against there being any overall purpose or design in nature.

Randomness enters into the genetic process at two levels: first, in the entirely random process of mutation,

which plays an important part in providing a candidature for evolutionary change, and, second, in the random allocation of chromosomes to germ cells and the random pairing of germ cells to form a fertilized egg. Indeed, the simple segregation ratios that represent the numbers of offspring of each genetic type expected according to Mendelian rules are quite widely used to illustrate the practical applications of probability theory. It is like a vast lottery in which booby prizes are more obtrusive than rewards. If two parents are both carriers of that deleterious recessive gene which, when inherited from both parents, causes phenylketonuria, then we can pretty confidently say that on the average one-quarter of their children will be victims of phenylketonuria, an "inborn error of metabolism" that may lead to serious mental retardation.

It is not quite good enough to dismiss this unhappy conjunction of deleterious genes as "bad luck" in the sense in which such a description might be thought to apply to a young parent's being killed by a falling roof tile. The difference is that a parent's being killed by a falling roof tile presents only the casual and in general



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pansion and recession alike. A long spell of full employment would substantially narrow existing wide differentials between the earnings of these groups and those of white males. In a time of layoff and business contraction, affirmative action is a mockery, but when there is full employment the cry for justice is heard more sympathetically by members of a majority whose own security is not threatened.

These repercussions are severe enough to alarm gentlemen in their clubs and boardrooms. The threat, I suspect, is still more grave. For men of property the charm of the 1970s lies in the way economic adversity has cooled the campuses and shoved American politics, already the most conservative in the developed world, still further right; one only has to look at Gerald Ford of all people, after Watergate and the Nixon pardon, and in the middle of a messed-up economy, very nearly winning the Presidential election. This could not have happened without general apprehension and dampened expectations of the efficacy of action by any national administration. As one comedian commented upon the stock-market decline which preceded the election, investors were selling out of deadly fear that one of the candidates would win. Lift the burdens of apprehension and apathy from the psyches of ordinary folk and—who knows?—they might entertain radical thoughts of inviting the rich to share rather more of their capital gains and inheritances.

**I**T GOES WITHOUT saying that it is scarcely respectable for the rich and their mercenaries, lawyers, economists, politicians, public-relations types, and so on, to openly proclaim their affection for unemployment, although among friends they tend to be more candid. One requires a respectable rationale, a convenient theory that combines apparent concern about the sufferings of the unemployed with actual capacity to avoid any action realistically calculated to alter their status.

My colleagues (I am an economist, but I am confessing, not boasting) have risen to the challenge. As their apologetic runs, we can't proceed sensibly toward universal job guarantees, even in the cautious, timid shape of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill, a revival of the 1945 original effort to write a serious job guarantee into law, because of the horrifying menace of more inflation. That menace is among economists embodied in a marvelous construction interred in the textbooks under the rubric of the Phillips curve.

The provenance of this notion that demo-

cratic societies must choose between inflation and unemployment deserves a paragraph. The late A. W. Phillips, a British economist who taught for much of his career in Australia, published in 1958 an article catchily entitled "The Relationship between Unemployment and the Rate of Change in Money Wage Rates in the United Kingdom, 1862-1957." Phillips's data appeared to demonstrate that, as unemployment rose, wages increased less and less rapidly. The man said nothing at all about prices, price inflation, or the manner in which rising wages might or might not be translated into commensurate increases in the cost of living. Nevertheless, his findings were rapidly extended in statements like this typical textbook pronouncement: "Low rates of unemployment tend to be associated with high rates of inflation and, conversely, price stability or low rates of inflation tend to be associated with high rates of unemployment." Triumphant conclusion: "There seems to be a trade-off between employment and the price level."

Economists shifted from Phillips's cautious conclusions about unemployment and wage rates to the words just cited very simply. After all, wages and salaries, including those of executives and other overpriced folk, amount to about 70 percent of business costs. Wherever competition reigns, employers have no choice except to pass along plumper labor costs to their customers in the shape of higher prices. The line of causation is direct: low unemployment stimulates wage demands, higher wages enlarge business costs, and these in turn lead to higher prices. It's an indisputable pity, but if we are to restrain demand inflation, we simply must operate the economy at what an MIT economist, Robert Hall, has recently labeled the "natural" rate of unemployment. A bit hard on those selected to serve their country by losing their jobs, but their patriotic sacrifice is nothing less than a valuable public service.

Let us absolve A. W. Phillips of blame for the intellectual sins committed in his name and look calmly, on its merits, at the Phillips curve in its modern guise. It is to start with an embarrassingly inaccurate explanation of recent stagflation—the malignant combination of persistent inflation and high unemployment. To those untutored in economics, the causes of a good part of current inflation have nothing at all to do with the Phillips curve. Out there in a world mostly beyond American control, OPEC has been busy quintupling petroleum prices, the Russians have been bidding up the cost of food in American supermarkets by vast grain purchases, and the world market for American farm products,



temporary fluctuations aside, has been exerting steady upward pressure upon domestic food supplies.

These external shocks initiated an inflationary surge in 1973 and 1974. In spite of the sharpest recession (1974-75) since the 1930s, that inflation continued, somewhat abated in 1976, and gave ominous signs of spurting once more by the end of that year. Here is the real embarrassment for Phillips curve groupies. Their mechanism has simply failed to work. Unemployment has escalated and stuck at the highest recorded levels since the Great Depression. Wages have risen more slowly than the cost of living. Productivity is improving. Nevertheless, prices continue to rise. It has proved perfectly possible to suffer simultaneously from severe inflation and still more severe unemployment and factory underutilization.

As it happens, there is a reasonable explanation at hand for events so baffling to partisans of inflation-unemployment trade-offs. Clearly, inflation is not a simple matter of translation of higher wages into higher prices. Rather, it is an aspect of the distribution and concentration of market power among suppliers and sellers, abroad and here at home, who are in a position, within generous limits, to set their own prices for the goods and services that they sell. In both recession and expansion, sellers with market power have chosen to charge more, even if, as a result, they sell less. Businessmen and respectable mainstream economists who judge full employment to be inflationary are utterly correct. It is only their reasons that are wrong.

Prices rise during both phases of the business cycle because in recession businessmen who enjoy monopoly or quasimonopoly power over their markets push prices upward in order to maintain their profit margins. When better times come, businessmen seize the opportunity to improve their profit margins. As fair example, recall that during 1974 and 1975, two of the auto industry's worst years since the 1950s, General Motors and its amiable rivals marked up auto sticker charges an average of \$1,000 per car, even though the customers were reluctant to buy. The rarer the customers, the larger the profit that needed to be attached to the selling price of each unit. Now that sales are behaving more wholesomely, prices continue to rise. Why not get more when the customers are willing to pay more? As in autos, so in steel, aluminum, and a long list of other industries in which one, two, three, or four dominant corporations set prices and conduct orderly markets unblemished by unseemly price rivalry. The manufacturers have

company. In the delivery of health services, a pleasant cartel of health insurers, hospitals, medical societies, and complaisant federal authorities has propelled medical costs higher at twice the pace of general inflation. The television monopolies have raised the charges for network time, and the university professors who lecture and consult have done rather better than the inflation rate. Lawyers have long judged advertising and price competition two serious breaches of legal ethics. Food prices rise partly because of the widening profit margins of food processors.

**"When people are scared about losing their jobs, they work harder and gripe less. In more dignified language, absenteeism declines and productivity ascends."**

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### Worse than the disease

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**T**HE DIAGNOSIS dictates the choice of remedies. One is as old as the 1890 Sherman Antitrust Act: break up the monopolies and end price-fixing in restraint of trade. The remaining true believers in antitrust would cheerfully fragment the large corporations, which, either by themselves or in combination with one or two peers, dominate many markets. Alas, the nonprogress of former Sen. Philip Hart's oil divestiture bill in the last Congress and its dim prospects in the new one are the latest evidence of the political futility of this tactic. Although no technical reasons justify the size of Exxon or General Motors, the public is yet to be persuaded that small is beautiful.

The only feasible alternative is control of key prices and profit margins in the very large proportion of the economy where old-fashioned competition is celebrated only by banquet speeches. Such controls were imposed during World War II and the Korean War. It is a historical curiosity that John Kenneth Galbraith, who was a price administrator, and Richard Nixon, who briefly served as a compliance attorney, drew diametrically opposite conclusions from their respective experience. Galbraith continues to believe that price control is both necessary and feasible. Nixon preached the wickedness of interference with private markets, but nevertheless suddenly froze prices August 15, 1971, and followed the ninety-day freeze with a year or so of more flexible but astonishingly successful wage- and price-hike limitations. As the Nixon experience suggests, wage controls generally accompany price controls. There recently has been the rub. The wage controls in 1972 and 1973 were considerably more effective than the price controls, for two excellent reasons. The Nixon controllers, probusiness to a man, were far more eager to check union demands than to interfere with business earnings, and



Robert  
Lekachman  
THE SPECTER  
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employers gladly cooperated with Washington to police the wage-rise limits. Seldom did patriotism pay better.

The fact is that in the United States (England is, of course, quite a different matter) mandatory price controls over concentrated industries and the health sector, together with voluntary wage guidelines, would probably work very well for a time. American unions are, after all, both weak and conservative. The path to full employment without inflation is impassible without a firm incomes policy and the statutory authorization of price controls administered by individuals who believe in what they are doing.

Does the political will to shape a national full employment policy exist? It is difficult to answer yes to that question. Last year full employment struck a Democratic Congress as sufficiently radical to bury Humphrey-Hawkins. For, as has been noted, full employment means diminishing long-standing inequalities of income, wealth, and power; inviting the black, brown, young, and female to the American celebration; and controlling the rapacity of doctors, lawyers, giant corporations, and other reputable extortionists. After full employment who will iron Russell Long's shirts, clean up after the Lutèce diners, and do the world's dirty work? Settle the job issue once and for all, and even American unions will begin to entertain dangerous thoughts about job redesign, codetermination, and similarly radical Swedish and German nonsense.

The fine Christian (and occasionally Jewish) men whom the good Lord has placed in the seats of authority and the halls of the mighty know that there are far worse phenomena than unemployment. One of them is full employment.

**J**OBS WERE THE MOST frequently reiterated of Carter's campaign themes and the President's squeak to victory required essential aid from blacks, Chicanos in Texas, the AFL-CIO, and aggrieved New Yorkers persuaded that Ford, not the *Daily News* headline writer (a great man), had actually told their city to drop dead. The ingratitude of Presidents is as notorious as that of princes, so there is no certainty that the new Chief Executive will automatically move toward genuine full employment, as distinguished from the moderate stimulation of a quick tax cut. Carter cautiously, reluctantly, and belatedly endorsed Humphrey-Hawkins, in the wake of his ethnic-purity blunder. He repeatedly emphasized his preference for job creation in the private sec-

tor and his desire to avoid expanding the weight of federal activity. At that famous luncheon at 21 for Henry Ford II and other corporate heavyweights, Carter promised that he would study the tax code a year or so before making recommendations for revision to Congress—the same tax code that he had described before less affluent audiences as a disgrace to civilization.

Nevertheless, there is some reason to believe that Carter will pursue more expansionary tax and spending policies than did his predecessor. Even businessmen who mostly voted for Ford are concerned about the continued sluggishness of the economy. When retail sales falter, profits are threatened and the long-awaited boom in investment never occurs. It appears that the "pause," "lull," or just plain old recession has gone further and lasted longer than is needed to serve the laudable purposes which unemployment serves.

A genuine commitment to sustained full employment demands a good deal more than a temporary tax cut or a brief loosening of the federal purse strings. The United States will move toward a coherent high-employment economy at the same time as it becomes politically feasible to diminish the power of great wealth and reduce inequalities of income and wealth.

The fate of George McGovern in 1972 and Fred Harris in 1976, two brave souls who rose to the perils of open discussion of such political dynamite, makes it depressingly plain that Americans continue to admire the people and institutions that make life harder for them than it need be. As Prof. Walter Burnham of MIT pointed out last year, the missing 45 percent of the American electorate who don't turn up on Election Day in Europe vote Labor, Socialist, or Communist.

All my life my country has suffered from the absence of a significant political Left. As I trudge through middle age toward the golden years of senior citizenship, I glimpse even less hope of the emergence of a democratic socialist party than I did during the late 1930s and early 1940s when, at least in Manhattan, revolution was in the air.

Until a credible left rises in the United States, unemployment will be a little higher when the Republicans are in the White House, a little lower when the Democrats take their turn. Genuine full employment, decent jobs at decent wages for every man, woman, and youth interested in working, has been a myth, is a myth, and will stay a myth so long as every four years voters choose between one party minimally to the right of dead center and a second minimally to the left. □



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# REVISING THE FACTS OF LIFE

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A framework for modern biology

by P. B. and J. S. Medawar

Every few weeks, it seems, the front pages of newspapers announce startling medical or biological discoveries. Our response usually reflects our pragmatism. When these advances are of obvious benefit to mankind, perhaps because they prolong life or ease suffering, we readily appreciate them and take note of their discovery with approval, even gratitude. Experimental research that may lead to major breakthroughs, but as yet has only potential application (such as the recombinant DNA experiments now being conducted), we tend to treat with skepticism. Increasingly, however, our response to news from the biological front is bafflement. Most of us lack an understanding that enables us to place discoveries in perspective, or even to place them within the framework to which they belong.

*The following compendium of information is intended to provide this perspective. These are excerpts from a forthcoming book, The Life Science: Current Ideas of Biology, by P.B. and J.S. Medawar. The subjects included here are heredity, evolution, eugenics, molecular biology, immunology, cancer, and senescence. A glossary of biological terms may be found on page 60.*

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## God and the Geneticists

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**N**OT SO VERY MANY years ago people talked about "God and the physicists," but today the geneticists have elbowed their way to the footlights, and a great change has come about in relations between science and religion: the physicists were in the main very well disposed towards God, but the geneticists are not.

It is upon the notion of *randomness* that geneticists have based their case against a benevolent or malevolent deity and against there being any overall purpose or design in nature.

Randomness enters into the genetic process at two levels: first, in the entirely random process of mutation,

which plays an important part in providing a candidature for evolutionary change, and, second, in the random allocation of chromosomes to germ cells and the random pairing of germ cells to form a fertilized egg. Indeed, the simple segregation ratios that represent the numbers of offspring of each genetic type expected according to Mendelian rules are quite widely used to illustrate the practical applications of probability theory. It is like a vast lottery in which booby prizes are more obtrusive than rewards. If two parents are both carriers of that deleterious recessive gene which, when inherited from both parents, causes phenylketonuria, then we can pretty confidently say that on the average one-quarter of their children will be victims of phenylketonuria, an "inborn error of metabolism" that may lead to serious mental retardation.

It is not quite good enough to dismiss this unhappy conjunction of deleterious genes as "bad luck" in the sense in which such a description might be thought to apply to a young parent's being killed by a falling roof tile. The difference is that a parent's being killed by a falling roof tile presents only the casual and in general



terms unforeseeable intersection of two otherwise unconnected trains of events, whereas the randomness that enters into genetic mutation and segregation is an integral and essential part of the genetic process, something provided for by the genetic mechanisms themselves. The randomness and the calamities that may go with it are "laid on" rather than casual.

A disputant intent upon defending the Argument from Design might at this stage declare that the entire genetic system showed clear evidence of design in the way in which Nature provides for and takes advantage of the random element in the genetic process. This is a poor argument and one that would apply almost without qualification to the proprietor of a casino.

It cannot be denied that there is an overall progressive tendency in the course of evolution—i.e., that living organisms seem to find ever more complicated and elaborate solutions of the problem of remaining alive and combating a hostile environment. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the appearance of progressiveness has in it some of the elements of an optical illusion. We are judging retrospectively when we say that evolution has been progressive in character and in doing so we tend to remember the success stories and forget the failures.

Unfortunately, the testimony of Design is only for those who, secure in their beliefs already, are in no need of confirmation. This is just as well, for there is no theological comfort in the amplification of DNA, and it is no use looking to evolution: the balance sheet of evolution has so closely written a debit column of all the blood and pain that goes into the natural process that not even the smoothest accountancy can make the transaction seem morally solvent according to any standards of morals that human beings are accustomed to.

Believers are no more likely to be shaken in their faith by the misgivings of geneticists than they were confirmed in them by the patronizing approbation of theoretical physicists; for faith rests upon quite other foundations—as secure to those who hold them as the derivation of a logical theorem.

## Biogenesis and Evolution

NO PRINCIPLE OF biology is more firmly established or less likely to be qualified than that of "biogenesis," which avows that all living things are descended from living things. Behind each living organism today there is an unbroken lineage of descent going back to the beginnings of biological time. In its negative form the principle would state that there is no such thing as "spontaneous generation"—e.g., the spontaneous generation of bacteria from putrefying organic matter or of protozoa from infusions of hay. Louis Pasteur, the greatest of all experimental biologists, is rightly credited with having carried out the

experiments that falsified the notion of a spontaneous generation of bacteria and at the same time made an alternative hypothesis much more attractive, namely, that the bacteria which so readily proliferate in warm organic broths derive from airborne organisms. This discovery of which the medical significance was clearly perceived by Joseph Lister, lies at the root of all antiseptic and aseptic techniques in surgery today.

The principle of biogenesis applies not only to whole organisms but also to some of their constituent parts; among cellular organelles the mitochondria are biogenetic in origin in the sense that they do not arise *de novo* by some synthetic process in the cell but are derived from preexisting mitochondria only. Biogenesis does not imply evolution, but an evolutionary relationship does of course imply biogenesis. Normal biogenesis is often given the extra connotation of "homogenesis," i.e., of like begetting like. Broadly speaking this particularization is true, although the theory of evolution obliges us to qualify it in detail. Thus the offspring of mice are mice and of men are men. No genuinely extravagant heterogenesis ever occurs, although in the days before empirical truthfulness was thought to be either a necessary or a desirable characteristic of professedly factual statements, all kinds of strange notions were rife—the most famous being the myth that geese might be born of such organisms as the attractive crustacean the goose barnacle, *Lepas anatifera*. Such notions belong to "poetism," a style of thinking which arouses as much indignation among scientists as the more idiotic extravagances of computerized literary criticism arouse in lovers of literature.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge once declared that zoology was in danger of falling asunder—the consequence of its huge mass of uncoordinated factual information. The evolutionary hypothesis\* is that which brings an order and connectedness to what Coleridge saw as the great toppling heap of information that made up the zoology of his day. It can be regarded as an amendment to the biogenetic principle that like begets like. The hypothesis states that the existing diversity of life-forms has arisen by progressive diversification during the course of biogenesis. It remains generally true to say that the offspring of mice are mice and of men are men, yet variants arise from time to time that may be recognized retrospectively as the beginnings of new specific forms. It is to the origin of these variants and the processes which keep them in being that we owe all the existing forms of life at present on the earth. Pedagogic "proofs" of the past occurrence of evolution are of the same kind and unfortunately the same intellectual stature as those "proofs" of the roundness of the earth which we learnt in our earliest school-days. It is not upon these so-called proofs, however, that the acceptance of such a hypothesis depends. It is rather that the hypothesis of evolution pervades, underlies, and makes sense of the whole of biological science in much the same way as the idea of the roundness of the earth permeates the whole of geodesy, chronology, navigation,

\* The word *hypothesis* in this context is used in its correct and technical sense: it is a vulgarism to suppose that the word has a pejorative flavor and that in describing as a hypothesis what is usually called the "theory" of evolution we are in some way depreciating it.



and cosmology. The evolutionary hypothesis is part of the very fabric of the way we think in biology. Only the hypothesis of evolution makes sense of the obvious relationships between organisms, the phenomena of heredity, and the patterns of development.

## Heredity, DNA, and the Genetic Code

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**I**N EVERYDAY LIFE we do (or more often do not) inherit wealth, property, honorific titles, or personal possessions of various kinds. In biological inheritance, however, what we inherit is a chemically coded message—a coded set of instructions—which specifies very exactly the course which the development of the next generation of organisms is to pursue. The chemical molecules that encode this genetic information are the giant polymeric molecules of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). The information-carrying capability of nucleic acid molecules depends on the virtually inexhaustible combinational and permutational variety of the four different nucleotides out of which the molecule is compounded. The information transfer system may thus be likened to a Morse code with four different symbols instead of the familiar two-symbol dot and dash. The nucleic acids are transported within, and form a major part of, the substance of the chromosomes in which the nucleic acids are stabilized by combination with a basic protein. Chromosomes are the material objects transmitted in the sperm and egg cells from one generation to the next; they are differentiated along their length and the singularities of nucleotide order which distinguish one stretch of chromosome from any other are known as genes. Chromosomes are visible under an ordinary microscope and the singularities which represent genes are now beginning to be identified by electron microscopes of sufficiently high resolution. It is noteworthy, however, that even if the microscope had never been invented and the biologist had no means of magnification at his disposal, we should still know of the existence of chromosomes and genes by reasoning of the same kind as that which has allowed us to believe in the reality of molecules and atoms, but in this case the reasoning is purely genetic, i.e., has to do with the outcome of breeding experiments. It is, indeed, still by this means that the existence of most genes is known to us. Some genetical purists of an older tradition, anxious to establish the autonomy of genetics and to protect themselves from the pretensions of molecular biology, are fond of emphasizing the degree to which they would have been able to work out the material basis of heredity without recourse to physical or chemical methods of analysis. Geneticists of the generation of William Bateson (1861-1926), who did so much to promulgate and at the same time add conviction to Mendel's laws of heredity, were indeed sometimes even impatient of all the talk then cur-

rent about chromosomes. The elementary account of Mendelism which follows is still essentially Bateson's, although it is reworded to bring in chromosomes.

In the fertilized egg chromosomes are present in pairs—the *diploid* condition—one chromosome from each pair having been contributed by each parent. Inasmuch as the ordinary "somatic" cells of the body are derived from this fertilized egg by a succession of symmetrical cell divisions, replicas of these chromosomes are present in pairs in virtually all the cells of the body. However, in the process of gamete formation (the gametes, "germ cells," are sperm and egg cells), the chromosomes of a pair separate in such a way that only one chromosome from each pair enters each gamete; the number of chromosomes in each is therefore half that of the ordinary somatic cell—the *haploid* condition. When fertilization occurs in the union of gametes from individuals of different sexes, the diploid number is restored and the chromosomes pair up with their corresponding opposite numbers from the other sex. It should be emphasized that after parting the chromosomes are dealt out into gametes entirely at random: there is no knowing into which gamete any one chromosome of a pair will go and the chance of any one chromosome's going into one specified gamete is exactly the same as the chance of its opposite number's entering that gamete. Fertilization is also an entirely random process from a genetical point of view, but the mechanics of the process of chromosome segregation and reunion ensure that there is a certain statistical regularity in the apportionment of heritable characteristics among the offspring. These regularities are embodied in Mendel's famous segregation ratios (3:1; 9:3:3:1) of which an account may be found in any elementary genetics or biology textbook. It was not until after the turn of the century that biologists came to realize that the observable behavior of chromosomes conformed pretty exactly with that which would be expected of any material agent responsible for propagating Mendel's "hereditary factors." Chromosomes corresponded to linkage groups, i.e., to groups of genetic determinants inherited together if at all, and the material basis of the genetical factors themselves came to be called genes, after the outstandingly brilliant work of Thomas Hunt Morgan and his genetical school at Columbia University had made it certain that chromosomes are differentiated along their lengths. Thanks to Morgan's school a new and highly important source of genetical variegation was uncovered—one that adds very greatly to the combinational varieties of the genes that may be found in the different individuals of a species.\* This is *crossing over*, a process in which genetical material is exchanged between the chromosomes of a pair, so breaking down conventional linkage groups. Thus just as the phenomenon of linkage may be thought of as a qualification of the principle of the independent assortment of genes into gametes, so crossing over may be thought of as a qualification of the phenomenon of linkage. Crossing over, independent assortment, and the random recombination of gametes provide among them for the enormously broad spectrum of

\* The combinational varieties of known human genes outnumber all the people who are alive today, have ever lived, or are likely ever to live.



genetic diversity which distinguishes every outbreeding species of organism.

It is a fundamental characteristic of Mendelian inheritance that genetic determinants maintain their integrity generation by generation, so that genetic determinants temporarily lost in a cross may be recovered many generations later in their original form and exercising the same effects. This is a genetical expression of the quite extraordinary molecular stability of the nucleic acids, i.e., of their comparative immunity to the disruptive influences which might be expected to affect molecules of this size.

One of Mendel's most brilliant achievements was to recognize and comprehend within his theory the phenomenon of *dominance*. A gene is said to be dominant when it can express itself in spite of being inherited from only one parent, i.e., when present in the heterozygous (see below) state; conversely, genes that can express themselves only in the homozygous state, i.e., when inherited from both parents, are said to be *recessive*. Dominance and recessiveness are properties, not of genes, but of the way in which they express themselves, which may be influenced by many other genes in the genome. In the simplest examples of dominant and recessive gene pairs—e.g., genes affecting our ability or inability to taste the chemical compound phenylthiourea—the dominant gene completely masks the effect of the recessive, for the ability to taste phenylthiourea leaves little room for the expression of an inability to do so. Blood group genes, however, are said to be “codominant.” Codominant genes express themselves even when paired with genes of a different kind. Such is the case of members of the blood group AB. If our methods of analysis were sufficiently sensitive, recessive genes could be identified even in those heterozygotes in whom their effects were masked by the action of dominant alleles.

In the simplest early formulations of Mendelian heredity, it was supposed that all hereditary determinants existed in binary alternative forms—alleles. Their alternative manifestations were sometimes as simple as the mere presence or absence of a particular character trait, such as (in human beings) the ability or inability to taste the chemical compound phenylthiourea, or the alternative forms made famous by some of Mendel's early experiments, e.g., green as opposed to yellow peas or round as opposed to wrinkled peas. When genetic determinants of the same kind are inherited from both parents a subject is said to be *homozygous* with respect to that determinant. People who are homozygous for some character trait produce gametes which all have the same determinant in respect of it. When dissimilar genetic determinants are inherited from the two parents the subject is said to be *heterozygous* in respect of that characteristic. Heterozygous individuals produce gametes of different kinds, because the chromosomes which are the vehicles of the corresponding unlike determinants separate and enter different gametes. The members of ordinary, outbreeding, natural populations are unlike, hybrid, or heterozygous for most character traits. It is indeed very unlikely that *complete* homozygosity for all genetic determinants can be achieved in any naturally outbreeding population, although an approximation to it can be arrived at by systematic and prolonged inbreeding.

**Inbreeding and hybrid vigor.** The genetic systems of most animals—and in human beings their customs and civil laws as well—provide for *outbreeding*. Inbreeding is a systematic pairing, generation by generation, of genetic relatives and in the most extreme form, where it is possible, is the self-fertilization of hermaphrodite organisms.

The effect of prolonged inbreeding is to change the genetic makeup of a population in the direction of homozygosity and ultimately of genetic uniformity: the mice used in many cancer research and immunological laboratories have been developed by a program of inbreeding that has involved the mating of brothers and sisters or parents and offspring for upwards of twenty successive generations. In the course of becoming homozygous, deleterious recessive genes will often be brought into conjunction, sometimes with fatal effects. For this reason most attempts to start inbred lines of mammals, which are naturally outbreeding, end in failure. In human beings it is well known that rare disorders of recessive determination turn up much more frequently in the offspring of consanguineous matings such as cousin marriages: the rarer the disorder, the greater will be this relative preponderance of hereditary disorders among the offspring of relatives. Communities that practice some measure of inbreeding may be assumed to have excreted highly deleterious genes present in the gene pool of the community as a whole—i.e., the unfortunate people in whom their effects were expressed will have died.

When two inbred strains of mice are crossed, their hybrid progeny are livelier, healthier, more rapidly growing, and larger mice which are normally very much more resistant to disease and all other forms of stress than the inbred lines from which their parents were derived. This hybrid vigor, “heterosis,” is a phenomenon very familiar to all stockbreeders. Its effects could be due to the masking of the action of rather unfavorable recessive genes by their normal opposite numbers or counterparts—unless, of course, the same harmful recessive gene should happen to be fixed in both lines. A more general consideration is that natural populations of outbreeding animals are highly heterozygous in makeup, so that the pattern of action of each gene will have evolved in relation to an essentially heterozygous constitution such as the hybrid provides.

The experience of stockbreeding has created the popular fallacy that human beings who are the product of interracial crosses are especially well endowed in respect of physique, beauty, intelligence, and sexual prowess—though not of course in *gentility*, for it is part of a cognate system of myths that true gentility, and with it the moral virtues of honesty, courage, and fortitude, can only come from “pure breeding.” There is no real substance to any of these beliefs because all natural populations, including human populations, are heterozygous and heterogeneous and the genetic makeup of each one will be that which has adapted them most effectively to the environments in which they live. There is no reason therefore why the progeny of a cross between members of two such populations should be specially well endowed.

**Nature and nurture: genetics and epigenetics.** Except avowedly as a means of avoiding all kinds of long-



winded periphrases, expressions like "the gene for albinism" or "the gene for tallness" are nowadays judged to be clumsy and potentially misleading, for their wording takes no cognizance of the *epigenetic* element in development. Genetics deals with the character of the information transmitted from generation to generation; epigenetics deals with the processes by which this information is translated into real life—into flesh and blood and distinctive behavioral characteristics. No modern biologist would ever speak of "the inheritance of intelligence," or of a genetic makeup endowing its possessor with intelligence, because with intelligence the importance of the epigenetic, nurtural element of upbringing is so very widely known and appreciated. It is however safe to speak of inherited *differences* of intelligence or differences of stature because such a formulation envisages the environment or the developmental ambiance as a parameter in the developmental equation while the genetic contribution varies.

It was at one time naively believed that in respect of each character trait it was possible to specify a precise degree to which its manifestation was due to "nature" or to "nurture"—to inheritance or to environment; thus it would be gravely asserted that intelligence was due 75 percent to heredity and 25 percent to environment. Such a formulation is utterly unacceptable: as Hogben and Haldane took pains to make clear, the degree to which a character difference may be attributed to the effects of nature is itself normally a function of nurture and *vice versa*. Thus our human susceptibility to scurvy might have been regarded as an "inborn" character trait in an older way of looking at things, but when we reflect that such a supposedly hereditary trait can make itself manifest only in an environment lacking in vitamin C we conclude that a categorical distinction between the operations of nature and of nurture cannot really be drawn. The fact that this is so should not, however, be allowed to derogate from the importance of attempting to define the functional relationship between nature and nurture in, for example, disabilities such as diabetes.\*

## Darwin Updated

**D**ARWIN'S THEORY of evolution by natural selection was propounded long before he or anyone else had any clear idea about the true mechanisms of heredity. By the early twentieth century, the Darwinian theory of evolution had acquired such an all-encompassing explanatory glibness that natural historians such as D'Arcy Thompson had become quite uneasy about it. Nowadays we should prob-

\* The use of "nature" and "nurture" to distinguish inborn differences from differences due to upbringing is at least as old as Shakespeare: in *The Tempest*, Act IV, Scene 1, Prospero describes Caliban with quite undue asperity as "a devil upon whose nature nurture will never work."

ably attribute this uneasiness to the realization that a theory which explains everything explains nothing, and indeed today we can see a general parallel between the explanatory facility of the older form of Darwinism, the doctrines of psychoanalysis, and the Marxian interpretation of history. Nevertheless, Darwinism is the theory of evolution that prevails today, entirely refounded though it has been on the basis of Mendelian genetics and the concepts of population dynamics—mainly by Sewall Wright, J. B. S. Haldane, R. A. Fisher, and, in its more practical aspects, by the research of Theodosius Dobzhansky and his school.

**Variation, mutation and candidature for evolution.** The candidature for evolutionary change is proffered by the prodigious and virtually inexhaustible range of genetic diversity made possible by the Mendelian processes of segregation and recombination. It has sometimes been rather naively objected that the variations so generated are merely variations upon a limited number of themes and that, being essentially of finite compass, they cannot possibly provide material enough for evolutionary change. This objection, however, is like saying that new writing is hardly possible because literature consists only of so many variations upon the twenty-six letters of the alphabet or that Western music must surely be exhausted because it consists of no more than variations upon the notes of the diatonic scale. In reality, prose can be enriched by an enlargement of vocabulary and music by the admission of new notes into the musical vocabulary—e.g., quarter tones. It would thus be reasonable to ask if there were any analogous enrichment of genetical variation which might enlarge still further the candidature for evolution.

New genetical information does indeed come into being in the process known as mutation. Mutations are random perturbations in the genetic material that change the character of the information they convey. They are sometimes subdivided into those that affect particular genes and those that affect quite extensive lengths of the nucleic acid chain and even of chromosomes. All mutations have it in common, however, that their informational content cannot be *specifically* directed by any environmental event; thus no mutation arises to fulfill or meet any real or imagined need of the organism. All that may be said is that the *frequency* of mutations is increased by certain environmental influences, notably ionizing radiations which can directly or indirectly affect DNA, just as the frequency of occurrence of, say, the number ten at roulette may increase by throwing the roulette ball more frequently, though ten will not come up more often because it makes or mars the fortune of any competitor. In spite of very strenuous and not always very scrupulous attempts to unseat it, nothing has yet occurred to challenge the belief that the environment cannot act "instructively," i.e., cannot imprint specific genetic information upon the genetic system of living organisms. No one who really understands the subtlety and enormous explanatory power of the English language need wonder about the adequacy of mutation, crossing over, segregation, and recombination to provide rich material for the evolutionary process. Nevertheless, it would be foolhardy to say that



we knew all there was to know on the subject and that no new source of genetic information will ever be discovered. Generalizations of this degree of dogmatic confidence are almost invariably refuted by the progress of science. The notion that genetic information is self-generated, however, pervades the whole of modern biology and underlies our interpretation of, for example, both antibody formation and bacterial adaptation.

**Natural selection.** Charles Darwin was perfectly aware of the animistic connotation of the term *natural selection*, but of course he did not believe that nature was actually selecting anything in the sense in which human beings pick and choose between alternatives. He made it perfectly clear in his correspondence, especially with Asa Gray, that he used the term natural selection in order to avoid the tedious periphrases that would be necessary if on each occasion he used it he were to cast the expression into a suitably objective form. An objective explanation of the principle of natural selection might go as follows (it is long-winded but formally exact).

All human beings alive 100 years from now will be the descendants of the human beings alive today, so that the human beings alive today make up 100 percent of the ancestry of future generations. Human beings, however, are of very many different genetic kinds and it is not to be expected that each genetic kind will make an equal or numerically proportionate contribution to the ancestry of the future population. Some genetic types will take a disproportionately large share and these are accordingly said to be "selected" and to confer extra *fitness* upon their possessors. The judgment is of course an entirely retrospective one so that the equation of natural selection to the survival of the fittest is a tautologous judgment. It is the pith of the theory, however, that the organisms with the higher net reproduction rate are more highly adapted to their environments than their less favored contemporaries. The word *net* in the expression *net reproduction rate* is of special significance. Even very senior biologists who ought to have known better have complained that modern Darwinism envisages natural selection's working entirely through the numbers of offspring produced, whereas in reality selective values are expressed by a figure that represents the *net* likelihood of living and reproducing, i.e., chances of an organism's giving birth to offspring that will survive to the age of their parents when they were born.

In the process of natural selection, what is or is not selected is an individual organism, but in the classical formulations of the genetical theory of selection the subjects of selection are envisaged as individual genes. In a freely interbreeding population, the Mendelian processes do not affect the frequency of individual genes. Gene frequency can be assumed to remain constant from generation to generation except—speaking in a deliberately figurative way—insofar as some external "force" causes the gene frequency to alter. One such force is "mutation pressure," which causes the frequency of a mutant gene to increase by reason of the fact that gene mutation is a recurrent process, so that the mutant gene is constantly reintroduced into the population. A second agency which may radically alter the proportion of genes in a popula-

tion is—as Sewall Wright was the first to foresee clearly—*luck*. In small populations particularly, one cannot assume that the genes present in the gametes are an exact fair sample of the genes present in the parental population: some genes will increase in frequency by luck therefore, and others will decline or perhaps even disappear—a phenomenon known as "genetic drift." Whatever effects may be attributed to these other agencies, however, all students of evolution agree that the factor which outweighs all others in bringing about a change in gene frequency is natural selection in the sense described above, i.e., the net reproductive advantage of the possessors of some genes over the possessors of their alternative or allelic forms.

There is an almost Newtonian flavor about the way in which natural selection enters the genetical theory of evolution by selection: the frequency of genes in a population remains constant generation by generation except insofar as some "impressed force" is brought to bear upon it that causes it to change, and by far the most important of these impressed forces is that of natural selection. Although the usage of "force" is figurative, natural selection may be said to have both a magnitude and a direction. Magnitude is measured in terms of net reproductive advantage and direction in terms of the nature of the replacement of one specified allele by another.

It would go beyond the authority of any philosophical or literary scientist to say that the theory of evolution just outlined was so firmly established as to be beyond the possibility of question or challenge in the future; on the other hand one should be clear where its real or imagined weaknesses lie. There is no serious doubt about the ability of natural selection to bring about the most radical and far-reaching changes in the genetic makeup of a population: the element of the theory that might raise misgivings is that which has to do with candidature for evolution. Even while recognizing the profusion and degree of detail of the heritable variation made possible by Mendelian process with mutation in the background to add extra combinatory symbols, one may still wonder whether the whole story has been told and whether there may not be some other hitherto unrecognized source of variation.

## The Politics of Biology

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**E**UGENICS IS THE political arm of genetics. The word was coined by Francis Galton (1822-1911), who introduced it in the following terms:

*Eugenics is the science which deals with all the influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage.*

*Man is gifted with pity and other kindly feelings; he has also the power of preventing many kinds of suffering. It is his duty to conceive it to fall well within his province to replace natural*



selection by other processes that are more merciful and not as effective. That is precisely the aim of eugenics.

These sentiments sound dignified, reasonable, and humane, but closer inspection of Galton's writing reveals a very sinister streak. He sneers loftily at the efforts at self-improvement made by people lacking the genetic endowments for leadership and, when proposing that the human race could with advantage be propagated through those most richly endowed by nature (as opposed to upbringing), says explicitly that if the less well endowed were to persist obstinately with the perpetuation of their kind, they would forfeit their claim to kindly treatment.

These passages make sorry reading and are largely responsible for the discredit into which eugenics has fallen today. That part of eugenics which insists unconditionally on the primacy of the genetical composition in making people what they are or are not has equally clear political affiliations, for it is a canon of high Tory philosophy that a man's breeding determines absolutely his capabilities, his destiny, and his deserts; and it is equally a canon of Marxism that inasmuch as men are born equal a man is what his environment and upbringing can make of him.

As both views are biologically mistaken, it is not surprising that biologists tend to walk delicately when entering discussions on eugenics.

This is a pity, for many genuine genetic dangers go unrecognized because biologists have been reluctant to express their views about the way things are going. Three questions are particularly important.

1. Do advances in medicine and public health necessarily lead to genetic deterioration?
2. Can anything be done to diminish the burden or the threat of the so-called hereditary diseases?
3. Is it possible to improve the genetic makeup of mankind by procedures that are politically and morally acceptable within the framework of an open society?—i.e., a society in which human diversity is allowed to flourish in all its exuberant variety and in which dissent and disputation, so far from being suppressed, are recognized as agencies of political progress.

The answer to this third question—that which embodies a program of so-called positive eugenics—is quite simply no: such a project is neither genetically *nor* politically feasible.

The first question is one of the utmost political and economic importance for any country with a national health service, i.e., one in which the cost of maintaining health is a charge upon the whole population.

The answer depends upon whether or not there is any genetic element in differences of susceptibility to disease or the likelihood of cure. That such a genetic element exists is known to be true of some diseases and not known to be false of any, so we may take it that the first question applies either directly or indirectly to *all* diseases. The answer to it raises grave politico-economic problems. It is clear that the preservation of relatively unfit genotypes will tend to increase or at least not to diminish their representation in the population. Thus if diabetics are to be kept alive and restored by medical procedures to something approaching a state of normal health, as it

is right that they should be, then whatever elements of their genetic makeup may have contributed to their diseased state will for that reason be disseminated more widely throughout the population.

Nevertheless, humanity and self-interest alike oblige us to do our best to meliorate diabetes. It should not be necessary to make such an avowal and indeed it would not have been necessary were it not for a recent revival of a kind of medical Luddism that denounces the entire apparatus of modern therapeutics as something that dehumanizes us and makes us increasingly dependent on the Machine. Moreover some people think, though very few have the brass to say so publicly, that the treatment of disease is in any case an officious interference with the working of God's will or of natural selection.

We can be fairly confident that the answer to the question "Do advances in medicine and public health *necessarily* lead to genetic deterioration?" is "No, not *necessarily*." Historical accounts of plagues and other murderous pandemics of infectious disease combined with even the briefest appraisal of the bills of mortality of London or New York in the middle of the nineteenth century confirm J. B. S. Haldane's belief that infectious disease is the most powerful selective force that has ever acted upon mankind. A measure of inborn resistance to infectious disease has sometimes been purchased by genetic tricks or metabolic quirks which are positively disadvantageous in an environment in which people are not at risk of the disease. In such situations it is positively disadvantageous to be genetically forearmed against a danger that does not exist. Indeed it is now clear, thanks to the work originally of Haldane and subsequently of Allison and others, that some forms of genetical abnormality persist in the population because of the protection they confer against infectious disease. Thus there is now little doubt that the prevalence of sickle-cell trait and sickle-cell anemia in West Africa and of Cooley's anemia (thalassemia major) and thalassemia minor in the Mediterranean basin is to be attributed to the modest degree of protection they confer against malaria.

**Negative eugenics.** We turn now to the second of the three questions posed above: can anything be done to diminish the burden or the threat of the so-called hereditary diseases?

"Negative eugenics" has the realistic ambition of diminishing, and as far as possible correcting, the distress caused by deleterious genes and genetic conjunctions. Even here, alas, ignorance has linked arms with a muddled benevolence to make some foolish and inhumane proposals. One such proposal, of Scandinavian origin, was at one time given some prominence by a society in England founded to promote eugenics: mentally deficient people should be sterilized so as to bring to an end the propagation of the gene responsible for their unhappy state. On closer inquiry, it turns out that the argument was based on the assumption that mental deficiency was due to the conjunction of a single pair of recessive genes which for the sake of argument we will call *d*, to distinguish it from the normal gene *D*, so that the genotype of the mentally defective would be *dd*. The Hardy-Weinberg Theorem shows how ill-judged such a recommendation



is, for if people mentally deficient for this particular reason were to occur with a frequency of 1 in 10,000 in the population then the frequency of the gene assumed to be responsible for the condition would be 1/100 and the frequency of its genetic carriers, the heterozygotes Dd, as high as 1/50. It would indeed be a "night of the long knives" if it were decided to sterilize one-fiftieth of the population, even supposing it were possible to identify the carrier state so as to make sure the knife was wielded on the right people. Only a minority of the offending genes are locked up in the mentally deficient themselves, so sterilizing *them* would not be effective.

In spite of these follies, we emphasize that rationally founded and humane procedures in the area of negative eugenics *are* possible and it is worthwhile outlining the form that some of them might take.

**Chromosomal aberrations**, such as those which give rise to Down's syndrome ("Mongolism"), Klinefelter's syndrome, and Turner's syndrome, being the results of chromosomal accidents of unknown origin are genetically irremediable. Down's syndrome is due to the presence in triplicate of a chromosome which should by rights be present only in duplicate. Its frequency rises so steeply with the increasing age of the mother at childbirth that its frequency in the population generally could be diminished—as indeed it is now being diminished—by a change of fashion or social attitude that favored young motherhood. When an older woman conceives a child, her physician will often recommend the procedure of amniocentesis, in which a drop of amniotic fluid is withdrawn so that the chromosomal makeup of fetal cells can be ascertained. If the fetus suffers from a gross chromosomal abnormality, the mother might well choose to have an abortion rather than give birth, even to a perhaps much longed-for child that was grossly defective. The parents' decision will clearly be influenced by their means, family situation, philosophy, and religious beliefs, so there can be no glib formulation of some one correct procedure that will apply to all cases.

**Dominant disorders.** A dominant disorder is apparent even when the gene responsible for it has been inherited from only one parent: it is thus apparent in the heterozygous as well as in the homozygous state. When such disorders are lethal or very gravely deleterious early in life they are genetically self-correcting, and their frequency in the population will be determined solely by the rate at which the malignant gene is reintroduced into the population by recurrent mutation. Nevertheless, specially unhappy problems arise when the gene exerts its action in middle or later life, for if children have already been born then natural selection is powerless to eliminate the gene. Mutations apart, most of the people who contract one of these diseases—including Huntington's chorea and a form of intestinal polyposis leading to cancer—will be the children of heterozygotes who became afflicted *after* they have had their children. Taking now D as the symbol of the malignant gene and d as its normal counterpart, the afflicted will generally be of the composition Dd. Approximately half the children of the afflicted will therefore contract the disease and all will live in con-

tinued dread of doing so. Under these circumstances charity suggests that potential carriers should decide not to become parents.

**Recessive disorders** do not make their appearance unless the gene responsible for them has been inherited from both parents. In the small but rapidly increasing proportion of such disorders in which the carrier state can be identified they are eugenically manageable. Although the disorders are individually rather rare, they form between them a numerous and important category, including certain grave inborn defects in the power to metabolize foodstuffs (phenylketonuria and galactosemia). Most of the overtly afflicted are the children of parents who are both carriers: approximately one-quarter of their children will be afflicted and half will be carriers too. To illustrate the possible eugenic management of such conditions along the lines first suggested by J.B.S. Haldane, we shall consider a "recessive disease" with a frequency in the population of 1 in 40,000. In such a case the frequency of the gene responsible for it will be 1/200 and the frequency of the carrier state 1/100. Eugenic management turns on the possibility of being able to identify the carrier state. Most overt cases of the disease could be eliminated in one generation if, having been identified, the carriers of the *same* harmful recessive gene were to be discouraged from marrying *each other*, or at least from having children by each other. The one carrier among each 100 people would therefore have to find a mate from one of the other 99, among whom only a few would be disqualified by carrying some other unfavorable recessive gene also possessed by the intended spouse.

## Fundamental Advances

### I. Molecular Biology

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**M**OLECULAR BIOLOGY has been, and still is, the greatest success story in biology since the formulation of the theory of evolution. The importance of molecular biology and the undisguised hubris of its practitioners has aroused envy and resentment in many old-fashioned biologists, and though it cannot be denied that there is a certain *nouveau-riche* air about molecular biology, of the riches there now is no serious question.

Gunther Stent, one of its most discerning historians, distinguishes two main streams of development in molecular biology—one structural and very largely European and the other informational, i.e., having to do with the storage and transfer of information in biological systems, perhaps carried farthest forward in the U.S.A.

**Structural molecular biology** may be said to have begun with the audacious application by W.T. Astbury of X-ray crystallographic techniques to such biological objects as feathers, hair, tendon and the fibers that make



up a blood clot. The great importance of Astbury's work was to reveal that these biological structures have an essentially crystalline orderliness and regularity, a discovery which gives special point to Schrödinger's famous pigram that the "so-called amorphous solids are either not really amorphous or not really solid"; Astbury's work abolished forever the idea of a hard and fast line of demarcation between physical objects and the substances of the living world—a conceptual revolution of the same kind but far greater than that said (in retrospect) to have been brought about by Wöhler's reputed synthesis of urea in 1828.

The elucidation of the structure of proteins—work which will one day make it possible to interpret most of the biochemical performances of the body in molecular terms—grew out of a number of distinct discoveries: one was the development by Sanger of chemical methods for "sequencing" proteins, i.e., for spelling out the arrangement along their polypeptide backbones of the various amino acids of which proteins are compounded, and so making it possible to define the structure of proteins in terms of the linear order known as its "primary" structure. The secondary structure is that which completes the specification of the backbone, especially as it relates to its branching. The tertiary structure of a protein is the pattern of folding, bulging, et cetera, and the complete specification of a protein as a three-dimensional structure. When the work of Perutz and Kendrew on myoglobin completed our understanding of the structure of a protein molecule for the first time, molecular biologists recognized this as a milestone in the history of biology. Since then, R. Valentine and H.G. Pereira have pretty well elucidated the structure of a virus, adenovirus 12.

The *informational* stream in the history of molecular biology began with the discovery by Avery, Macleod and McCarty that deoxyribonucleic acid—DNA—fulfilled some of the qualifications of a biological philosopher's stone, for it turned out to be a DNA that was responsible for the transmutation of one pneumococcal variety into another, something that had, until then, been a most perplexing phenomenon. In a few years it became clear from research on bacterial viruses and in orthodox genetics that DNA is indeed the repository of genetical information and the agency by which it is communicated from one generation to the next. Except for the small quantities of DNA in mitochondria the DNA of animal cells, including the germ cells, is confined to the nuclei, as we should expect, having regard to the fact that the nucleus of the germ cells is the only material nexus between one generation and the next.

It is an accepted generalization in molecular biology that genetically coded information can flow only in the direction of nucleic acid → protein and not the other way about—a view long resisted by conventional biochemists, who were most reluctant to see proteins dethroned and denied what seemed to them a natural right to be credited with the execution of all biochemical performances. According to this revolutionary view, nucleic acids must specify the structure of all the proteins made in the cell. A substantial fraction of molecular biology—that which is sometimes called "molecular biochemistry" (it would

be hard to imagine a nonmolecular biochemistry)—has been devoted to working out the means by which the structure of a nucleic acid is eventually mapped into the structure of a protein.

Inasmuch as there are more than twenty different amino acids in proteins but only four different kinds of nucleotide in DNA, more than one nucleotide—in fact, a triplet—must code for each amino acid. The mapping process takes place at two stages, each involving the transfer of information to a nucleic acid. These are *transcription*, in which the nucleotide sequence of DNA is mapped uniquely into the nucleotide sequence of *messenger RNA*, and *translation*, mediated through *transfer RNA* molecules that recognize both amino acids and the RNA code and can thus assemble the amino acids in the right linear order. This translation of genetic into structural information is irreversible, so there is no known or at present conceivable method by which germinal DNA could be imprinted with information acquired in an organism's own lifetime. This is the principal technical reason no one now believes in the feasibility of evolution in the Lamarckian style.

## II. Immunology

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**T**HE EXPLOSIVE GROWTH of immunology during the past ten or fifteen years has been one of the most remarkable phenomena in modern science, although from the standpoint of the history of ideas its rapid growth in recent years is not nearly so surprising as its almost complete intellectual indolence from about 1900 until the mid-1930s. The reason, we believe, is this: until the mid-1930s or thereabouts, immunology was treated as an appendage to bacteriology from the point of view of research, teaching, and university administration. Immunology was therefore confined to its immediate practical applications: it was a matter of vaccines, skin tests, diagnostic antisera, blood groups, allergic reactions, and not much else. It had indeed every imaginable shortcoming of an "applied science" pursued without regard to its deep theoretical foundations. A new era began when chemists, zoologists, and geneticists started to build up an entirely new conceptual structure for immunology, whose pillars were to be a study of the biology of self-recognition, the molecular basis of specificity and the process of information transfer in biological systems. To these basic researches we may add an examination of the possibilities of immunology for transplantation, the treatment of cancer, and a finer genetic fractionation of the population than any other method has made possible.

An immunity reaction is an adaptive response of an organism which has the effect of destroying, neutralizing, sequestering, or annulling the effects of some foreign intruder such as a bacterium, virus, protozoan parasite, a



graft from another individual and quite possibly a malignant growth. Substances that arouse an immune response are described as antigenic or substantively as "antigens." The distinguishing characteristic of an antigen is its foreignness, i.e., its property of being non-Self. However, even Self-constituents can sometimes arouse an immunity reaction, for the foreignness that is a qualifying property for being an antigen means only foreignness to the reacting system, and if some parts of the body have been sequestered throughout life, their liberation through injury or some degenerative process enables them to exercise their antigenic power. Reactions upon such Self-constituents are referred to as "autoimmune." Bodily constituents altered by chemical action or virus infection may also arouse autoimmunity.

The pattern of immunological reaction which has come to be regarded, almost certainly wrongly, as typical—indeed, as prototypical—is that in which an antigen excites the formation of an "antibody." An antibody is a protein circulating in the bloodstream, whose structure is exactly complementary to that of the antigen or, more accurately, to that part of the antigen which confers its antigenicity upon it. When antigen and antibody meet, any one of a whole variety of reactions may take place: agglutination or clumping if the antigens are in the form of cells, sometimes a rupture of the cell membranes, a coprecipitation when the antigen is itself a soluble protein, or a detoxication when the antigen is a poisonous substance—a toxin—produced by a bacterium. The end result, in a successful immunological reaction, is a destruction of the antigen or an annulment of its effects.

**Cellular immunity.** For very many years antigens and antibodies dominated the thoughts of immunologists so completely as to exclude any other conception of how the immunological response might work, but nowadays it is realized that an entirely different kind of immunological reaction is mediated through the action not of antibodies, but of lymphocytes (see below), which are hostile to and bring about the destruction of the antigen or whatever its vehicle may be. The reactions mediated through the action of lymphocytes are just as specific as those of which the agents are circulating antibodies. Cell-mediated immunity is that which is responsible for graft rejection (see below), for the destruction of intracellular parasites, for antitubercular immunity and possibly also for antitumor immunity; on the other hand humoral—that is antibody-mediated—immunity is thought to be responsible for coping with most ordinary bacterial and viral infections.

**Lymphoid system.** Cells responsible for recognizing antigen and for reacting upon it in one way or another belong to the lymphoid system, a system of cells of which the prototypical member is the *lymphocyte*.

**Recognition of antigen.** Even with antibody formation—basically a much simpler process than cell-mediated immunity—the informational problem of how an antigen is recognized and of how a structure exactly complementary to it is then synthesized is one of which the solution was very far from obvious. The problem would

not be so difficult if antigens were limited in variety and the antibody formed was one or other of a limited repertoire, but the trouble is that antigens are as various as living organisms themselves, and an organism can manufacture antibodies against antigens which have not even been invented yet—e.g., the synthetic organic chemicals which are being produced yearly in ever greater profusion and which are perfectly capable of conferring antigenicity upon any macromolecule they attach to. Before the coming of molecular biology, the problem did not seem to be a dismayingly complex one, for it was believed that an antigen could itself inform the structure of an antibody, i.e., it could itself provide the information which directed the synthesis of an antibody molecule, and thus the antibody molecule could be built around and upon the antigen in such a way as to have an exactly complementary structure. But when it became clear that information cannot flow from protein to protein, but only from nucleic acid to proteins, some other explanation had to be sought. One possibility is that lymphoid cells in the course of their development become randomly diversified so that to every possible antigen there corresponds a lymphoid cell, and therefore a potential "clone" or cell division lineage of lymphoid cells capable of manufacturing the antibody complementary to it. This diversity could arise mutationally in the line of cells that leads from the fertilized egg to the billions of lymphocytes of the adult body, or the mutational process could be one that takes place in some lesser cellular component than the nucleus. At any event, the process envisaged is one in which lymphoid cells with a vast number of reactive potentialities are already available and waiting only to be aroused into full activity by confrontation with an antigen.

The occurrence of random variation in the line of cells arising from the zygote to bring forth adult lymphoid cells is not the only possibility, however; it is at least conceivable that all the information necessary to underwrite the formation of antibodies is already present in the fertilized egg and is therefore equally apportioned to all the lymphoid cells that descend from it. At first this sounds rather like a tall order, but it ceases to be so when one reflects upon the enormous variety and subtlety of information already coded within the zygote nucleus—e.g., upon the fact that the complete repertoire of female behavior insofar as it is programmed is encoded in the male zygote and *vice versa*, waiting to be released or realized by the appropriate external stimuli or upon those almost incredibly delicate nuances of the developmental process which make it possible to say that an infant has got exactly his mother's nose or his uncle's habitual leer. If this interpretation is true it follows that when an antigen acts upon lymphoid cells it acts in a manner pretty closely analogous to that of an embryonic "inducer," and like an embryonic inducer it arouses one rather than another potentiality of the responding cell.

Although the matter is not yet finally settled, it can be taken as certain that *unless* a mechanism is stumbled upon that no one has yet even dreamed of, an immunological response to no matter how strangely exotic an antigen represents an awakening or activation of some preexisting potentiality in the responding cell and is not



any sense an indoctrination of the cell by some molecular property of the antigen.

**Transplantation immunity and tolerance.** The chemical makeup of one human being's organs must be so closely similar to another's that the phenomena of transplant rejection may seem specially surprising—so surprising, indeed, that for very many years surgeons did not believe it. They believed, as some surgeons in Russia still believe, that the failure of a transplant was to be attributed more often to faulty surgery than to the extreme decision of the body's ability to identify "non-Self." To say this is not by any means to depreciate the importance as it has turned out, the increasing importance—of surgical expertise in the execution of transplants. Nevertheless, the immunological element outweighs all others in importance. Other factors that play a very important practical part are whether or not the operation is physiologically feasible and whether or not an organ substitute can be rigged up to tide a patient over what otherwise might be a period of acute deprivation in which his condition would deteriorate seriously. The transplantation of brains belongs strictly to science fiction: it is not possible today, and there is no serious possibility of becoming possible in the future. As to organ substitutes: heart transplantation would not of course have been possible unless apparatus was available to maintain the process of respiration. There is unhappily no substitute for the liver, although attempts have been made to use a pig's liver outside the body in much the same way that a patient might use a kidney machine. Kidney transplantation was given a great boost by the invention of the artificial kidney machine, because one could then bring a patient with diseased kidneys to the operating table in a condition fit enough to withstand the therapeutic procedures to be used on him. Among these therapeutic procedures—and that upon which the whole of modern transplantation rests—is the use of *immunosuppressive agents*, drugs that depress the immunological response enough to tide the patient over the period during which rejection might occur and at the same time to help the graft to start to undergo the rather mysterious adaptive process which ends by making it fairly acceptable to the body. Most of the immunosuppressive agents used in transplant surgery are agents that prevent cell division, and thus prevent the full expression of the immunological response. With very few exceptions, they are plundered from the huge armory of cancer chemotherapy. The drug now in most general use throughout the world was introduced by Prof. R.Y. Calne after lengthy trials of kidney transplantation in dogs. This is the drug Imuran, a derivative of the drug known as mercaptopurine, which mimics one of the essential ingredients of nucleic acid closely enough to derange cell division. In addition to Imuran, it is customary to use steroid drugs related in their mode of action to cortisone; the dosage of steroid drugs is always raised if there is any suspicion of a transplant's being rejected, because steroid drugs are able to reverse the rejection process. The use of steroids is, however, fundamentally objectionable because of their highly unpleasant side effects, and the whole immunosuppressive procedure still leaves

very much to be desired. The entire dosage regimen is a knife edge in which underdosage will lead to the rejection of the graft and overdosage to secondary damage on cells other than those that transact immunological responses—particularly blood-forming cells; in addition to this there is the ever-present danger that immunosuppression may so far weaken the body's immunological defenses as to make the patient an easy prey to infectious illness. The trouble is that with one exception no real immunosuppressive agent is known, i.e., no agent that suppresses an immunological response without suppressing a great many other things as well. The one exception is *antilymphocyte serum*, which effectively eliminates the kind of immunity described above as cell-mediated—that which causes transplant rejection. Unfortunately, antilymphocyte serum has grave shortcomings of its own, not the least of which is that if it is to be supplied at an economic price a course of injections costs in the neighborhood of \$2,000. Even in countries without a national health service, means would doubtless be found to get round this difficulty if it could be shown that antilymphocyte serum or the active protein extracted from it was unconditionally safe and very much more effective than any combination of agents already known.

Techniques of immunosuppression are constantly being improved, and it may be taken for granted that if there is a demand for them, heart, liver, and lung transplantations will become as frequent and as successful as kidney transplantation is today. Oddly enough, the one tissue which has so far resisted all attempts to transplant it from one person to another is skin. It is either particularly adept at arousing an immunological response or particularly vulnerable to it.

## Biological Enigmas

### I: Cancer

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**C**ANCER IS A GENERAL name for a great variety of different growths, so that to speak of "the cause of cancer," or indeed to speak of "cancer" as if it were a single disease, makes no more sense than to lump together tuberculosis, pneumonia, and plague under the heading of "bacteritis" and to enquire plaintively what is the cause and cure of bacteritis.

**Kinds of cancer.** Cancers of epithelial tissues, i.e., of tissues that bound surfaces, particularly of the skin and mucous membranes, are known as carcinomas. Cancers of connective tissue cells or of cells that are normally disperse in character are called sarcomas. Tumors of the white blood corpuscles are known comprehensively as leukemias. A further differentiation is marked by specific mention of the tissues from which tumors arise; thus a malignant tumor of bone is an osteosarcoma and of lymphoid cells is a lymphosarcoma. Tumors of the pigmentary cells of the skin, known as melanocytes, are melanosarcomata and tissues of the supporting cells of



the central nervous system are called gliomas. Very often the plain suffix *-oma* is used to distinguish a benign as opposed to a malignant growth: thus an osteoma may be no more than a bony excrescence or protuberance and neuroma no more than a swelling of a nerve caused, perhaps, by some miscarriage of the regenerative process.

**Causes of cancer.** Transformation of normal into malignant cells can be brought about by very many different agencies. Among them are X rays or other ionizing radiations and a whole variety of hydrocarbons, many of which were first extracted from or identified in distillates of coal tar, among them methylcolanthrene, benzpyrene, and dibenzanthracene. Viruses are well known to cause certain tumors in chickens (a discovery of Peyton Rous's) and also to cause leukemias in mice and cats and probably—though this has not yet been the subject of a completely convincing demonstration—in man. One of the most interesting, though in some ways one of the most bewildering, of methods for producing tumors in experimental animals is insertion into the subcutaneous tissues of a small, relatively impermeable, plastic film. If the film is perforated no tumor forms, so evidently it is not the material of the film itself that can be held responsible: some impairment of cellular or fluid movement is more likely to blame.

**Treatment of cancer.** Tumors are treated by surgical excision whenever possible—a procedure in which early recognition and the ability to localize the tumor growth by X radiography are both of the utmost importance. With some tumors extirpation is of course not possible. Among these are leukemias and tumors so far advanced that secondary growths (metastases) have already established themselves throughout the body. Alternatively, or in addition, tumors are treated by one or other of the great variety of antiproliferative agents—agents that impede cell division (not in malignant tissues only, unfortunately, but in dividing cells throughout the body). X radiation or gamma radiation—such as is emitted from a slug of radioactive cobalt—are the most important antiproliferative procedures. Their great advantage is that radiologists have learned to control the administered dosage very exactly and that, unlike the chemical antiproliferative agents, they can be switched off when they are thought to have done their duty. Chemical antiproliferative agents improve year by year, or almost month by month.

Another line of attack is through hormones, for some tumors are made up of cells which are hormone-dependent: tumors of this kind can often be kept under control by withdrawing the hormone they need and sometimes substituting for it a hormone with the opposite effect. A case in point is the treatment of tumors of the prostate gland, an accessory male sex organ, by the administration of, for example, the synthetic estrogenic hormone, estradiol.

The possibilities of an entirely different style of treatment have been explored rather excitedly in recent years: this is *immunotherapy*, based on our knowledge of immunity to tumors.

One of the earliest discoveries made in the experimental

analysis of tumors was that by repeated coaxing (in effect by repeated trials of which many would be failures) tumors arising in rats and mice could often be transplanted to other rats or other mice respectively. It was not very often that the little tumor grafts "took" and started growing right away; on the contrary the more usual thing was for the tumor first to grow and then to dwindle away to the accompaniment of a rather fierce attack by the recipient's lymphocytes, cells which play a crucially important part in the immunological defenses. A mouse or rat in which a tumor had first grown and then dwindled away was absolutely refractory to the inoculation of that same tumor on a second occasion. The same refractory state could sometimes be set up merely by the inoculation into the intended recipients of the tumors of a hodgepodge of normal tissue cells, especially embryonic cells. Phenomena such as these encouraged early students of tumor transplantation to believe that the regression of a tumor was, in effect, a cure and that forearming of its intended recipient by inoculations of tumor cells and specially of normal embryonic cells was a preventive measure. Peyton Rous (1879-1970), the greatest experimental pathologist of his day, was perhaps the first man to shatter these illusions. He asked what evidence there was that the "immunity" so commonly spoken of—was an immunity directed against the tumor as such, or whether it might not merely be an immunity directed against the tumor graft considered as a genetically foreign cell—whether, in fact, it might not be an immunity similar to that which is directed against foreign grafts generally.

In the 1930s a number of American cancer research workers discovered true tumor immunity, i.e., an immunity directed against malignant cells as such. They found, in effect, that a mouse sometimes develops immunity even against an autochthonous tumor, i.e., a tumor arising and growing in itself. No such discovery would have been possible before the development of strictly inbred strains of mice—mice which, differences of sex apart, resemble each other as closely as if they were identical twins. Great hopes have been built on this phenomenon of autochthonous tumor immunity, and some of these hopes are just beginning to be fulfilled. Tumor immunity is of the same general kind as transplantation immunity, i.e., the process which leads to the rejection of foreign grafts. However, tumor antigens are not all that easy to identify and define by orthodox immunological methods and it is a cloud on the horizon that there has not yet been a finally conclusive demonstration of an immunological response to human tumors generally. Circumstantial evidence in favor of human tumor immunity is nevertheless strong enough to have persuaded most pathologists to have accepted the idea on probation, and it is therefore worth examining some of its practical consequences. The most important are:

1. The regression of tumors, so far from being a great rarity and something only reluctantly believed in, must be quite a common phenomenon. Indeed, many more tumors must arise than we ever become aware of in a clinical sense—tumors which have been spied out by circulating lymphocytes and which have aroused and succumbed to an immunity reaction.



2. It will be worthwhile to remove the greater part of a tumor or as much tumor tissue as is accessible even in the clear realization that the whole of it cannot be removed. The rationale of doing so is to remove the burden thrown upon the subject's immunological defenses by the constant outpouring of antigenic matter from the tumor—a process which may very well impede the immune reaction.

3. The center of gravity of clinical cancer research will change from the empirical trial of antiproliferative agents to an inquiry into why immunological processes that ought to work very often don't and into how the immune process can be boosted.

4. Cancer chemotherapeutic agents which are also immunosuppressive agents (and most of them are) should be used with the utmost circumspection; moreover, it should not be taken as a matter of course that in the removal of a regional tumor all the regional lymph nodes should be radically extirpated. Indeed, in the extirpation of mammary tumors there is no convincing evidence that wholesale removal of all draining lymph nodes is a beneficial procedure.

## II: Senescence

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**T**HE EXTREME ORDERLINESS, predictability, and apparently "programmable" character of senescence has been a challenge to biological theorists for very many years. The most famous pathological theory of aging—the theory that treats aging as a diseaselike process—was that of the Russian zoologist Elie Metchnikoff. Aging, he believed, is due to cumulative self-poisoning—autointoxication—by the toxins of bacteria normally resident in the gut. He thought that these processes might be diminished or annulled by replacing the gut flora with lactic acid bacilli. It is to the advocacy of Metchnikoff that we owe the widespread popularity of yogurt today as an article of diet; and from him also arose the belief that Bulgarian peasants owe their longevity to the regular consumption of sour-milk curds.

Although Metchnikoff's special theory of the aging process has not found favor, he deserves great credit for having been the first to treat aging as an epiphenomenon of life—something superimposed upon the normal processes of living—rather than as a phenomenon somehow entailed by the life processes themselves. This is now widely thought to have been a sign of good judgment on his part.

Another theory, Leslie Orgel's, regards aging as the consequence of accumulated errors of information processing in the body. Among dividing cells such errors may of course arise in the nucleic acid information source itself, but in addition mistakes are bound to occur in the transcription and translation of genetic infor-

mation into bodily constituents, and if these happen to be enzymes then the products whose manufacture they make possible will be awry as well. The attempts that have been made by Holliday and others to test this theory—e.g., by feeding organisms on kinky amino acids, et cetera—have on the whole tended to support it.

**Cures of aging.** From a therapeutic point of view, Orgel's theory is a bit depressing because if aging is due to the process he envisages then nothing very much can be done about it. In general, however, there is no reason in principle why some of the more disagreeable changes that accompany aging should not be diminished or annulled—particularly those which are clearly secondary in nature, i.e., consequent upon a failure or a deterioration of some other organ system. These are physical changes, no different in principle from other disease processes and no less amenable to investigation and treatment.

The idea of prolonging life has nevertheless aroused a great deal of disquiet among those who are especially conscious of the consequences of overpopulation and the danger of interfering with the natural order of things. It should be borne in mind, however, that almost all advances in medicine may prolong life and it is not at all easy to draw a sharp dividing line between research which is demographically acceptable and that which represents a gratuitous interference with the natural order. As with all lifesaving and life-prolonging measures, the real mischief arises from their being adopted piecemeal and haphazardly instead of being part of a well-thought-out political program. By far the most important single factor that has contributed to the growth of populations has been the reduction of mortality in infancy and childhood; there would be no objection at all to the measures that have made this possible if only they had been accompanied by an equal concern over the possible mischief of a disproportionately high birth rate.

The mechanism of a possible evolution of senescence can only be understood in the light of the principles that underlie the *measurement* of aging.

It is clear that aging could be measured on an individual and personal basis, by choosing some suitable biological performance and noting how it fell away with advancing years, but the shortcomings of such an approach are so obvious as hardly to need discussion. A measure that has universally been agreed upon also has its shortcomings: it is a measure of *vulnerability* and its rationale is that, inasmuch as no one can die merely from getting a good chronological score, the essential change that takes place in the course of life—to which every source of deterioration will contribute—is an increase in vulnerability, i.e., in the likelihood of dying.

The principle of the measurement of vulnerability is extremely simple: if all organisms die from accidental causes only, e.g., from infection, predation, starvation, or accident, and if there were no senescence, i.e., no deterioration with increasing years, then the organism will be no more likely to die when chronologically older than when chronologically younger. Translated into human terms this would mean that a human being would be no more likely to die in his sixth decade than in his fourth or his third or his second.



Imagine, then, a group of a thousand organisms marked or somehow identified at birth and followed through life until all of them have died (*ex hypothesi* from accidental causes). If there is no process of aging then a constant fraction of this population will die during each year—say 5 percent. If the rate of mortality is indeed 5 percent per annum the numbers left in the population at the end of each year will be as follows: (1,000), 950, 903, 858, 815, 774, 736, 699, 664, et cetera, approaching zero asymptotically, i.e., getting nearer but never quite getting there in theory—although it does in real life.

If this series of numbers is plotted against age, it will form a curve of a kind very familiar in physics and chemistry—the so-called die-away exponential curve. As with the curve of unrestricted exponential growth, the logarithm of the numbers remaining in the population will form a straight line when plotted against time, because it is characteristic of logarithmic graphs that equal distances represent equal multiples or submultiples instead of equal increments or decrements, as in the ordinary arithmetic plotting.

This at once suggests a method by which we can ascertain the degree to which senescence plays any part in the mortality of this population: if the curve of mortality is more-than-logarithmic, it signifies that there is an aging process, i.e., that vulnerability is increasing with advancing years—the property for which a measure was sought.

Nevertheless, this measure is full of difficulties that should not be underestimated. It takes no account of certain good reasons why an animal's vulnerability should diminish with increasing years. For one thing, animals become behaviorally wiser—wiser in all the senses embodied in "once bitten, twice shy." They also become immunologically wiser, for an animal which has been exposed to an infection once and has survived it is thereupon better equipped to cope with the same infection if exposed to it a second time. Then again, some changes that are unmistakably senescent in character—e.g., the menopause in women—are not accompanied by any increase in vulnerability. On the contrary, some causes of death—such as those associated with childbirth—have now been outlived.

Another objection to the use of vulnerability as a measure of senescence is that it is essentially statistical in character and cannot be applied to a single individual. Nevertheless, if a supposed "cure" for aging or anyhow for senile decay is to be tried out on, for example, a population of mice, the only measure of its efficacy that scientists will accept is the degree to which it changes the life table of the mice from its ordinary senescent form into something more closely approaching the exponential die-away form of a population in which senescent changes do not occur.

The orderliness, predictability, and ostensibly programmatic character of senescence has tempted many biologists to believe that senescence has evolved in higher organisms; but what could be the advantage of such a process? Weismann thought of aging as an agency of population control: it eliminated the unfit from the population and so made room and gave extra food to the young and vigorous. It is, however, difficult to see how

this would work in terms of an evolutionary process, for if the chronologically older animals were indeed decrepit and generally speaking in the way, the supposedly young and vigorous should have no difficulty in elbowing them aside from the trough and would not in reality be put to a great disadvantage. Weismann was a shrewd man, however, and he may intuitively have suspected that populations do better when propagated through relatively young germ cells—particularly oocytes—than through older germ cells. This is certainly a possibility, but no one has yet demonstrated that any mammal does better for being propagated from generation to generation through young oocytes (in effect young mothers) than through old oocytes—something that would make an interesting subject of research.

Medawar and Williams independently propounded the idea that an evolution of aging has come about not so much because of any positive advantage in the process of senescence as because of the absence of any disadvantage. Their argument turns upon the fact that, even in the absence of a process of senescence, the numerical contribution that chronologically older animals can make to the population of the future becomes progressively smaller, so that the force of natural selection is progressively attenuated. This is not because the chronologically older members of the population need be supposed to be less fertile, but simply because the forces of mortality acting upon them are so fierce that as time goes on fewer and fewer are left. This will be true even of a theoretically immortal population exposed to a real mortality, for example of 10 percent per annum—an unnaturally low figure. The life table of such a population will follow that of the exponential die-away curve already described. One consequence of this is that selection in favor of or against genes that come to expression somewhat late in life will be very much reduced, and indeed one method of eliminating a "bad" gene from a population is to postpone its time of action until the latter period of life. Conversely, it can be shown that if there is genetic variation in the chronological age at which a gene comes to outward expression, then the time of expression of a gene conferring selective advantage will be progressively brought forward in life, while that of a deleterious gene will be progressively postponed; a genetic disaster that befell an organism only at an age which in fact it never reached could not affect its well-being in any way. Once begun, any senescence, i.e., deterioration with increasing chronological age, would be a self-reinforcing process. The process of senescence being already established in human beings, the force of selection against any genetic disabilities that occur late in life is reduced virtually to zero.

This "genetic dustbin" theory of senescence almost certainly represents part of the truth, but equally certainly is not the whole truth.

Whatever the truth may turn out to be, it is now certain that senescence is part of the natural order of things. It is not one that should be interfered with without the utmost care and circumspection. In any case the present incentives to do research into aging are not very great. The time span of the research is too long for those anxious to make a reputation in a hurry.



## The Great Amateur

PEOPLE OFTEN WONDER whether human beings are capable of further evolution. Leaving open the question of whether any such evolution will occur or not, the answer is assuredly yes. Human beings have a vast reservoir of inborn diversity and an open or "wild type" breeding system which would make it possible for that diversity to be fully exploited; they have no extreme specialization such as the anteater's snout or the fly trap of an insectivorous plant—no specializations that commit them to one particular kind of life. Indeed, from an evolutionary point of view man is the great amateur among animals. A merely professional animal would probably have committed itself by structure or function to a bondage it could not now escape.

It is, however, very unlikely that any major evolutionary change will come about during the future life of man on earth; but although it is unlikely that any major evolutionary change will occur, small systemic changes in gene frequency—which are, in a technical sense, evolutionary—are quite likely to happen: the age of pandemics may not yet be over. Certain viruses which may hitherto have lived in comfortable symbiosis with man might become pathogenic in a mutant form, and if so the differences of genetic makeup could have a profound effect on our susceptibility, and our genetic makeup will change accordingly. There may also be a change in the tempo of aging: as life extends farther and farther beyond the age of reproduction or as reproductive age becomes younger and younger, so the pressure of natural selection against harmful late-acting genes will progressively diminish and any senescent changes for which they are responsible will take even deeper root in the human population; this effect will become increasingly obtrusive because the chronological age at which people admit to getting on in years—e.g., to being middle-aged—gets later and later.

Our reasons for thinking that no major evolutionary change will occur are twofold. In the first place the exercise of any artificial selection over very many generations would require acquiescence in the rule of a long dynasty of tyrants, and although such a tyranny is not inconceivable, such consistency of policy assuredly is. In the second place ordinary or endosomatic evolution is no longer a principal agency for securing fitness in human populations.

Many important differences distinguish the long-term prospects of human beings from those of any other species of animal. For good or ill, human behavior is purposive: we do things because we intend to or fail in spite of our intentions. Human behavior can be genuinely purposive because only human beings guide their behavior by a knowledge of what happened before they were born and a preconception of what may happen after they are dead;

thus only human beings find their way by a light that illumines more than the patch of ground they stand on.

The argument that human beings will not survive because most other animals have not is poor: the possibility of acting on good intentions differentiates us very sharply from other animals. To depreciate moral judgment on the ground that it has evolved because of its survival value is not a valid counterargument: survival value is the very quality we are claiming for it.

At no time since the early years of the seventeenth century have human thoughts been so darkened by an expectation of doom. In their apocalyptic moods people nowadays foresee a time when pressure of population will become insupportable, when greed and self-interest have so far despoiled the environment that the life of man will once again be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short, when international rivalry has brought commerce and communications to a standstill.

We, on the contrary, do not believe that any evil which may befall mankind cannot be prevented or that any evil which now besets it is irremediable. It is not reasonable on the one hand to cower at the havoc science and technology may cause in achieving the Baconian ambition of "effecting all things possible" and at the same time to exclude from all things possible the discovery of remedies for technological malefactions. For remedies people look first to science and then look away in disappointment, partly because they mistake the nature of the problems and partly because they have grown so used to thinking of science and technology as a secular substitute for the miraculous; but most of the problems that beset mankind call for political, moral, and administrative rather than scientific solutions.

Another way in which human beings are amateurs in a professional world is that not all human activities have survival as their principal purpose. Even though our extracurricular activities are those that make life worth living—Mozart's piano sonatas and the paintings in the Uffizi Gallery amplify the human spirit and not human DNA—nothing will reconvert human beings from amateurs into pros more quickly than the imminence of mortal danger. In this context, being professional may imply submitting again to the tyrannical philosophy of reproductive advantage that has brought us this long way already. Clearly some compromise between the amateur and the professional is called for.

Although it is widely regarded as frivolously superficial to suppose that the human predicament is remediable, nothing in reality could be more superficial than failure to realize that acquiescence in the notion of impending doom is a principal factor in helping it to come about. In spite of all its frightening groans and rattles, the great world machine can still be made to work, but not unless it comes to be accepted that the long-term welfare of human beings cannot be secured by policies that promote the interests of some people at the expense of others or even the interests of mankind at the expense of other living things. *The unity of nature* is not a slogan but a principle to the truth of which all natural processes bear witness. The lesson has been learned too late to save some living creatures, but there may just be time to save the rest of us. □



## Glossary of Technical Terms

**ADAPTATION** (a) The process in which sense organs cease to arouse nerve impulses after long exposure to a uniform stimulus. (b) Progressive change in a population of organisms that adapts its members better to their prevailing habit or environment. (c) In bacteria, as (b) but specially referring to adaptation to use new food-stuffs or to resist the action of antibiotics.

**ALLELE (ALLELOMORPH)** In the earliest formulations of Mendelian theory it was believed that genetic determinants were always present in pairs and were responsible for the determination of alternative and contrasted characteristics (e.g., tall vs. short in pea plants or—as discovered very much later in human beings—tasting vs. nontasting of the compound phenylthiourea). When this simple state of affairs is realized the alternative or “allelic” genes occupy correspondingly opposite positions on each chromosome of a pair, so that in sexual reproduction allelic genes separate and enter one gamete or another, as chromosomes do.

**AMINO ACIDS** Amino ( $\text{NH}_2$ )-substitution products of a fatty acid: the monomer or building block of a *polypeptide*.

**CHROMOSOME** The vehicle of the nucleic acid that encodes genetical information. Chromosomes are present in pairs (the diploid condition) in the body cells of all sexually reproducing animals, but only one member of each pair is present in a gamete (the haploid condition).

**DOMINANCE** The state of affairs when one *allele* overrides the outward expression of another. A dominant gene exercises the same outward effect when inherited from only one parent as when inherited from both. Genes that make their effects apparent only when inherited from both parents are said to be *recessive*.

**GAMETES** Reproductive cells—in males, sperm, and in females, eggs. Each contains the haploid number of chromosomes but on fertilization of the egg the diploid number is restored.

**GENE** The least element of the *genome* that may be held responsible for an inherited character difference.

**GENOME** Genetic apparatus of an organism considered as a whole and as characteristic of it, e.g., the “human genome,” referring to the chromosomal makeup characteristic of human beings.

**GENOTYPE** Genetic constitution of an organism as opposed to its overt character makeup or *phenotype*.

**GONADOTROPHINS** Pituitary hormones that stimulate the development of the gonads and the maturation of the gametes.

**HETEROZYGOTE** An organism is described as “heterozygous” for a specified gene pair when it has inherited *unlike alleles* from its two parents. If the two alleles are the same, the organism is “homozygous” with respect to that locus. The corresponding substantives are “heterozygote” and “homozygote.” Outbreeding organisms are heterozygous for most gene pairs and homozygosity for

most gene *loci* is a rarity which can only be approximated by prolonged inbreeding.

**HYBRID VIGOR (HETEROSIS)** An accession of physical vigor and resistance to disease, often accompanied by increased size and growth rate, associated with the hybridization of animals which, because of *inbreeding* or maintenance as “breeds,” have become homozygous for many gene *loci*.

**INBREEDING** Systematic propagation of a lineage through genetically related organisms, reaching its extreme form in self-fertilization, where it is possible. Free-living organisms are characteristically outbreeders. Breeding tends to homozygosity where outbreeding favors heterozygosity.

**INFORMATION** Stands for order or orderliness as it may be embodied in a material structure or in a message specifying its assembly, as exemplified by the genetic signal embodied in chromosomes. The negative of information is disorder or, in a thermodynamic context, entropy. Obtrusive signals conveying no information and diminishing order are dismissed as noise.

**LOCUS, LOCI** Position(s) on the chromosome occupied by allelic genes. The locus occupied by one *allele* corresponds anatomically to the locus occupied by the other on the second chromosome of the pair.

**MITOCHONDRION** Cellular organelle of biogenetic origin regarded as the seat of cellular respiration. It is unusual in its possession of extranuclear DNA.

**PHENOTYPE** See *Genotype*.

**PLASMA** The fluid portion of blood, i.e., blood minus corpuscles.

**POLYMER** A complex molecule formed by the compounding of smaller building elements, monomers, of the same general structure; thus, polysaccharides are generally polymers of 6-carbon sugars and proteins of *amino acids*.

**POLYMORPHISM** The stable subdivision of a population into genetically distinct types, as of human blood groups.

**POLYPEPTIDE** The backbone of the protein molecule. A *polymer* of amino acids.

**RECESSIVE** A gene that exercises little or no outward effect unless it is present in both chromosomes of a pair, and therefore has been inherited from both parents, is said to be recessive. Contrast *Dominance*.

**SERUM** The fluid portion of blood after coagulation.

**SPECIFICITY** The exactly complementary relationship between an agent and something acted on, or between instruction and performance fulfilled.

**TELEOLOGY** The science of purposes or “final causes,” or the doctrine that all bodily structures and performances are determined by purposes they fulfill.

**TELEONOMY** The neutral term (contrast *Teleology*) describing but not explaining the quasi-purposive or goal-directed activities of living things.

**VIRUS** An infective nucleic acid (RNA and DNA) that subverts the synthetic machinery of living cells in such a way that more copies of itself are produced. In the infective form of the virus the nucleic acid is normally wrapped in a protein capsule.

**ZYGOTE** The diploid cell resulting from the union between sperm and egg, and the starting point of the development of all sexually reproducing organisms.



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# A TALK WITH TROTSKY

Exile and idealist meet in Mexico

by Peter Berlinrut

**I** HAD NO THOUGHT of visiting Leon Trotsky when I arrived in Mexico in September 1937 the day before its Independence Day. Politics wasn't talking to me then or if it was, its voice was a whisper that wasn't conveying the sense I was looking for. I was standing in a bar in Monterey with a man from the American consulate drinking beer, hearing the sounds of the parade, and

talking. The young man nodded in the direction of the music and the marchers outside and said in quietly indignant tones, "What have they got to celebrate? It's a miserable, pathetic country, absolutely pathetic." His words heightened my mood that this wasn't politics' day of illumination or hopeful oracles. I was quite relieved when we shook hands and parted outside a few minutes later. It was a



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ight warm day, the parade was still in progress and while it wasn't exactly an extravaganza of floats and majorettes and panache, it was still a parade. I stood and watched. The bass drum boomed, the feet heaved in rhythm, the uniforms didn't have much braid or buttons or color or fit, but the men wearing them stepped along brightly enough. Above all, there were the Mexican eyes with their huge dark irises that seemed to wring the last bit of seeability out of everything. I had my fill of it in a short time and turned away. No, I had not come to Mexico to seek improved acoustics for the voice of politics. I had come for a badly needed renewal of essential perspective. I couldn't have said so then but I think what I came for was to find evidence of at least some slight clues for the continuing existence of a first day of creation.

Within an hour or two of reaching Mexico City, I found a room in Calle Republica de El Salvador in a place that was considerably past its better days as a hotel. It was more a rooming house now and it gave shelter to a motley array of lives as could be imagined. In the seven months I lived there I remember unsuccessful matadors and picadors and their equipment and retinue hanging about in what was once the lobby, a few Germans who had left the fatherland after World War I in the belief that it was all washed up, a sergeant in the Mexican army on duty in the capitol, other faces and figures whose past or present or names I never got to know. They could break in on my awareness only occasionally and I am sure they were content if not relieved that we never spoke to each other. The only modest exception was a very stout, middle-aged lady who seemed still to be in training for a career as a pianist. She would practice several hours a day, and the patio would resound with piano music which I rather more liked than disliked. She conducted her life by a religious conviction (as I deduced) that to live was to exude benevolence, and she smiled in accented sweetness whenever she met anyone in the patio or the lobby, she proffered a platter of cookies, she offered her cherished cat, the adoration of which could surely unite the human race. I suppose I kept my distance from all the people around me, not out of any indifference or numbness or hostility but because I had already known such lives and been instructed as much as I could be by my experience of them. I now had to hearken elsewhere to know what they were saying. My mission as stated was rather to locate a continuing first day of creation if it existed and then to read out the immediate and contemporaneous in its terms. And I was

beginning to take some early steps in that direction. There was an altered hue to the sunlight that fell on a small fig tree growing amid the red tile in the patio, there was early life in the exotic birds in the cages hung along the walls of the patio and there was the extremely old woman who seemed to roll time back to the very first day of life, sometimes insidiously, sometimes magnificently.

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### The old man

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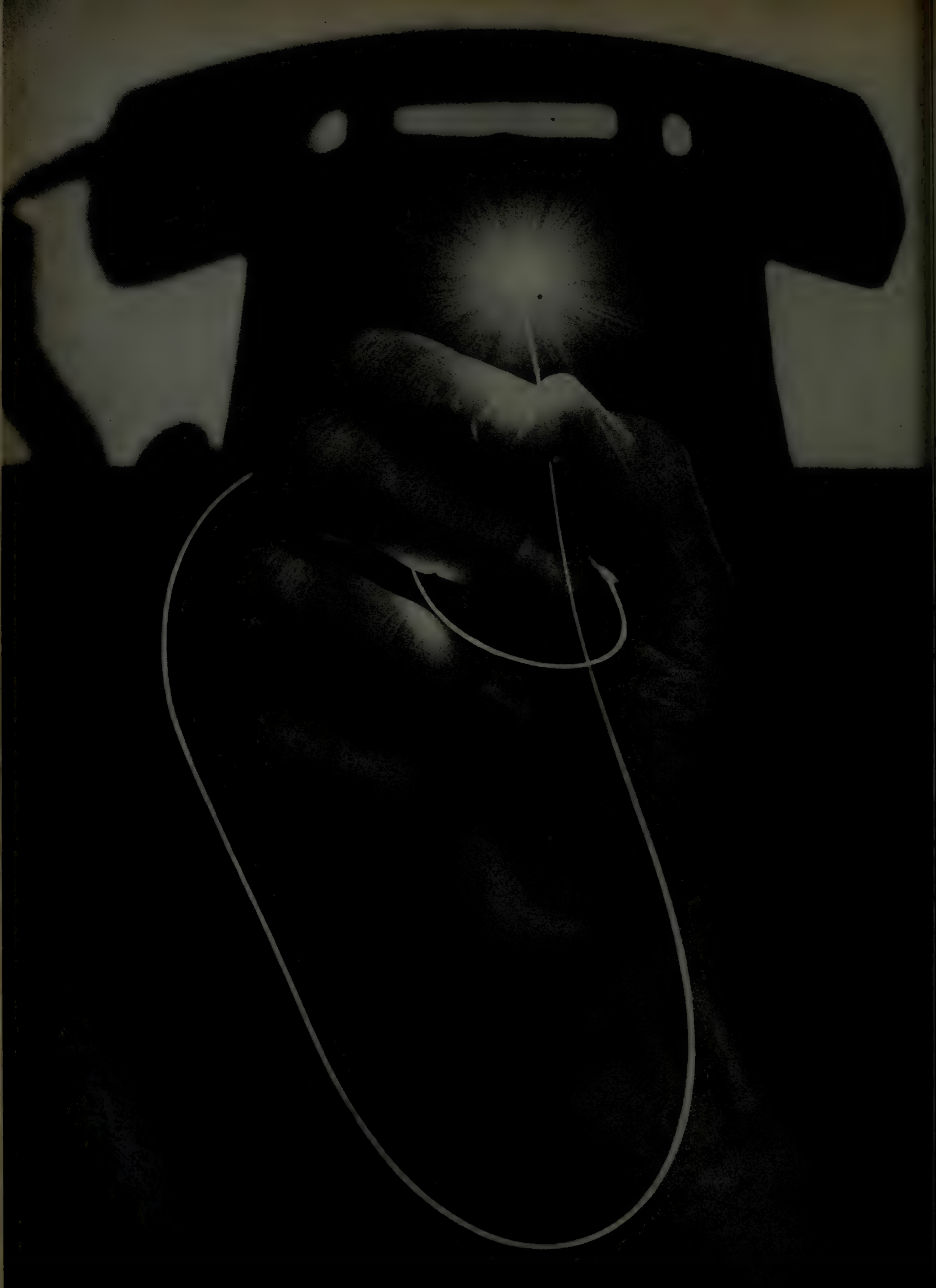
**I** GOT MY MAIL at the American Express office on Avenida Madero and it was there I was recognized one morning by a young woman who remembered seeing me at meetings of the late A.J. Muste's American Workers party, which had later merged with the Trotskyites. We chatted and it turned out she was then acting as one of Trotsky's secretaries and living in his household in Coyoacán. Shortly before we parted she asked if I would like to meet the old man. She was mildly taken aback when I answered that I had read most of his important writings and that at the moment politics was not my reigning interest. Moreover, I doubted that Marxist-Leninist politics were the solution to the Western world's dilemma. She thought I might profit from a discussion with the old man. I couldn't explain to her that I suffered from a fairly common anticelebrity syndrome and that, having read him, I felt I knew the best of him. I would be learning little in confirming he was a living man with two eyes, one nose, and a pince-nez. Also it would be making inroads on his time and energy (which she herself said were in short supply) for no good reason. With all due respect for the enormity of his intellect and role, I couldn't agree with his ideas. Being a true believer, she did not take well to this questioning of her faith and insisted I might change my mind after talking with him. At that point I felt, what was there to lose? I fell in with the idea, and we parted with the understanding that she would telephone me at the rooming house.

Four or five days later there was a knock on my door, and the porter whispered there was a telephone call for me. It was the secretary with the news that I had an appointment with Trotsky on an afternoon a few days away. I hung up and was a bit shuddery with the prospect of running through all those familiar and overused neurocerebral circuits dealing with social man, the economic order he lived in, and the need for insurrectionary therapy to reform it.

It was a long haul by bus to the street in

**"Having read Trotsky, I felt I knew the best of him. I would be learning little in confirming he was a living man with two eyes, one nose, and a pince-nez."**







# Hear the light.

Today, communications may be at the threshold of another revolution in technology.

Someday soon, when you make a phone call, your voice may be carried between telephone offices as pulses of light over a hair-thin glass fiber.

We call this new technology lightwave communications.

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Lightwave communications has the potential for carrying enormous quantities of information — from phone calls to business data to TV programs — at low cost. And it can do it in much less space.

Right now, we're testing an experimental system that can carry nearly 50,000 phone calls in a cable of glass fibers not much thicker than clothesline. It could do the work of several copper cables, each as thick as your arm.

That will allow us to save space in the crowded cable ducts under the streets of many of our cities. Which in turn will lessen the need to add new cable ducts to expand service.

But even carrying that many calls uses only a fraction of a light beam's capacity.

So it will give us plenty of room to grow.

To make lightwave communications possible, the people at Bell Labs and Western Electric attacked a number of problems simultaneously.

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## What Had to be Done:

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What kind of problems?

Creating some of the most transparent glass the world has ever known.

Developing techniques to draw the glass into highly precise fibers which, despite their tiny size, have a complex internal structure that keeps the light from leaking out.

Devising ways to protect the delicate fibers from damage, to make them into cables strong enough to pull through underground ducts, and to splice them — a hundred or more at a time.

To generate the light carried by the fibers, they developed a tiny, solid-state laser smaller than a grain of salt. (Today's design is expected to operate continuously for ten years or more.)

To put information onto the light beam, they designed equipment that turns the tiny laser on and off millions of times a second.

And they developed repeaters to regenerate the light signal along its way, as well as photodetectors at the receiving end to convert the light back into an elec-

trical signal that can travel throughout the telephone network.

We think lightwave communications may prove a long step forward in the development of communications.

We may put it to use in the early 1980's to relieve cable congestion between major switching centers. For special applications, we may use it even sooner.

And it may someday carry business data, visual communication services and facsimile transmission into your home and office.

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## Seeing to It:

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Innovations from Bell Labs and Western Electric are put to work by your Bell telephone company. That's another reason you have the most reliable, least expensive telephone service in the world.

To keep it that way, one of the things we're doing is seeing to it that before long you'll be hearing the light.

*One of a series of messages to keep you informed of how telecommunications technology is changing our world — and the part Bell Labs, Western Electric and your Bell telephone company are playing in it.*



**Bell Laboratories/Western Electric**



Peter Berlinrut  
A TALK WITH  
TROTSKY

Coyoacán where Trotsky lived. In my pocket was a small loose-leaf notebook with the questions I would put to him. When I left the bus at the designated street the first sight to greet me was a sentry box and a lone Mexican soldier in it. It flashed on me this was in behalf of Trotsky's security and in quick succession it occurred to me this was quite paltry and makeshift. The young soldier was sunk in daydream and took no notice of me. I walked by him, I walked by a tall wooden fence topped by the reddest bougainvillea imaginable growing from the other side and knocked at the door to the patio. I was quickly admitted by someone, and walked into a corridor, where I shook hands with the organizer and commander of the Red Army.

It was the first of four visits I paid to the house in Coyoacán and it was the longest one. The notebook never did come out of my pocket, not then nor in any of the subsequent times. I suddenly felt there was something school-boyish and artificial in it. I wasn't there to report him journalistically for history, I was there presumably to satisfy the needs of my mind. Such questions as I did ask of him were plowed over in an energetic but perfunctory manner that didn't satisfy me at all. Worse, I soon found I was doing most of the talking and at Trotsky's instigation. He had a very fair command of English and was asking the questions. Were there any signs that trade union leaders (apart from the Reuthers in Detroit and the Dunns in Minneapolis) were looking at human society beyond bread-and-butter issues? Why hadn't American radicals been able to shake the faith of the unemployed in the capitalist system? Was the American intelligentsia beginning to wake up to the depth and meaning of the world crisis? And so on in that vein. I had an uneasy feeling throughout that I was a college freshman being asked by Albert Einstein to explain the stars.

After more than an hour, I looked for signs from Trotsky that the interview was over, but saw none. No one came to remind him tactfully that he had another appointment. As the light began to fail, he said that it was time to eat and asked if I would care to join him and his wife, Natalya, and their guests. I said it would be a pleasure.

It was at the dinner that we reached a difference of opinion. I do not recall the steps by which we arrived at it but the topic of conversation became the *Partisan Review*. It had been a cultural organ of the Communist party but in a recent issue it had announced that it was cutting all ties to any and all political parties and striking out on a path of

complete editorial independence. I read the magazine regularly, liked it and thought its declaration of independence was modest and laudable. That didn't sit well with Trotsky. The news that *Partisan Review* was ending its ties to Stalinism was welcome indeed in his household but not the mild and tepid way in which this had been announced. Trotsky was indignant. The conversation became lively at this point, and entered my memory so vividly that I take the liberty of reproducing it as direct dialogue.

TROTSKY: Weak, weak, too weak! They declare their independence, good! They will now think for themselves, fine! They will be free, yes, but not too long. They speak too much on their knees, they speak with excuses as if they are half ashamed. They must speak with strength, with defiance, with loudness!

BERLINRUT: Isn't it possible that many intelligent people and perhaps the world as a whole is surfeited with ringing manifestos, bombast, rhetoric? Isn't it possible that one of the reasons that people are turning away from the Communists is that they are tired of the screaming denunciations, the abusive polemics, apart from their general policies?

TROTSKY: No, no, this is not the issue. The issue is the editors state a position but they state it like beggars asking for the right to exist!

BERLINRUT: Isn't that an effective way sometimes, a way that can last? Do we have to denounce the lies in creation before we set out to live life as we think we should?

TROTSKY: In politics, yes. Absolutely. If lies speak loudly, then truth must speak twice as loud. Today the editors say they are independent but what will happen tomorrow? What will happen when the Stalinists begin to counterattack? Have you any idea of this? The Stalinists will not be polite, they will not be nice liberals. They will strike with hammers, with lies, with knives. Then the editors will capitulate. You will see. I remember when the Futurists began their movement in Paris and they did it with éclat, they did it with loud pronunciamiento. But if you begin a new movement with a whisper, with *s'il vous plaît*, with excuse me that I am alive, then it cannot survive. It will be snuffed out by the first hard wind, the first loud opposition.

The argument ran on in this vein and I held to my position. I do not think he was annoyed with me for it. Ever the teacher sure of his superior understanding and knowledge, he had tremendous patience for discussion and in fact never so much came into his own as when trying to move someone's mind from one position to another. At the end of the evening



the night was chilly and tingling as I walked toward the bus stop flushed with the warmth of debate. I couldn't see whether anyone was in the sentry box and it looked even more pathetic as a bulwark against the dangers that threatened the man I had just left.

**M**Y NEXT VISIT to Coyoacán didn't occur for five or six weeks, but in the interim Trotsky was more on my mind than he had been when I had known him only through his writings. Instead of focusing my ideas or at least leaving them the way they had been, he had confounded my confusion, adding another dissonant obbligato to the many which needed a balancing melody or theme. There were days like the one in which I stood in the Palacio de las Bellas Artes and mused on the mural by Orozco, the one in which human life was a wild river of guns, bayonets, exploiters, and scoundrels, whirling into oblivion. I was shamed to smithereens that I had ever dared dream of making contact with that fair first day of creation that I had supposed the structure of the cosmos carried within itself through all time. If that mural told the truth, then it was the last day of creation as far as we humans were concerned, not the first, never. I stood there until I felt I had absorbed its message, then went outside to walk it off. One of the first things my eyes fell upon was a woman vendor selling corn on the cob on a nearby street corner. She didn't so much sell corn as dispense largesse in a ballet of consummate grace. The business of reaching into the boiling water for a cob with an improvised pincers, handing it to a buyer in a leaf wrapping, taking money and making change, putting charcoal in the brazier was a flow of movements reminding me of a gifted organist seated at a great console and using hands, feet, eyes, mind, memory, soul to work the keys, the stops, and the pedals involved in a well-known and well-loved piece of music. I was quite enthralled and I stood there thinking, that should be us, presiding over our lives come hell or high water. The effect of the Orozco mural began to lessen. I wasn't hungry, but silly as it might seem to my rational mind, I went over and bought a piece of corn to see if I couldn't work my way a step or two inside the spell by interacting with its live core.

Every second or third day I would run into the secretary at the American Express office so that Trotsky was kept active in my mind. The more I thought of that little difference of opinion we had about the future of *Partisan*

*Review's* independence, the more convinced I became that he was wrong. He had forgotten that the editors were not strangers to radical politics. They had been there, they had seen its dangers close up, they couldn't be taken unawares by evils they had met, understood, and rejected. I suppose one of the reasons I brooded about this matter was that it was the one item of social reality of all those that Trotsky discoursed about that I knew anything of at first hand. It then occurred to me that if Trotsky could misjudge the political mood and the political possibilities in my country, why couldn't he be wrong about the situation in the world? I didn't want to erect too big and speculative a mastodon from the little bone of likelihood I had arrived at, but neither did I want to overlook any clue bearing on the question, Whither the Western world? Any possible rediscovery I might make of a first day of creation wouldn't be entirely satisfactory if I couldn't see a likely way by which our world could advance to it. Not that I wasn't prepared to go my way alone but it seemed much nicer if I could go in company. So I kept thinking about Trotsky and his ideas in light of the impression he had made on me in that first visit. He was enthusiastic about voluntarism, initiative, exhortation, leadership. I suppose that came naturally from the man who had moved from front to front during Russia's civil war, inspiring the troops with his great eloquence. But, on the other hand, he laid great emphasis on social determinism. In his history of the Russian revolution, he heaped irony and scorn on the czar, the dukes, the royal generals in World War I for being so confused and helpless. There he was saying that a strong tide makes a weak swimmer, there he was saying that no man came off effectively when the social odds were stacked too high against him. That left him in a position of infallibility. When the Smolny insurrection came off successfully, that was because Lenin and he knew what they were doing and how to take advantage of the situation. When he lost out to Stalin, however, he still knew what he was doing but the social developments were all against him.

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### The two Leon Trotskys

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**T**HE SECOND VISIT with Trotsky was not as long as the first, and despite my intention to break through the layer of set terms and catchwords that encased the talk, I did not do much better than the first time. For one thing, I didn't

**"If lies speak loudly, then truth must speak twice as loud," said Trotsky. "If you begin a new movement with a whisper, then it cannot survive."**



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Peter Berlinrut  
A TALK WITH  
TROTSKY

have my ideas as clearly articulated as I do now. For another, those terms that carried a finality of meaning for one of us did not carry the same finality for the other. I reminded him that in his writings he had called the Soviet Union as it now existed in 1937 a bureaucratized working-class state, implying it was a preponderantly good and moral society with incidental, if important, defects. What did he mean by that? He smiled, nodded his head in a manner conveying that he had answered this many times but would now answer it once again, and explained that as long as all productive facilities and important property were collectivized, the foundation for the eventually classless and just society was not subverted. He went to considerable exposition to make his point, and I was listening to him closely, but at the same time my mind kept raising objections, objections that either I didn't voice or voiced poorly because I would hear one thing and at the same time think of something else. I kept protesting, What is this mystique of a working-class state? What evidence is there to commend it when in Russia so far it has had so little effect on morality? How does this fetish of collectivized property legitimize the actions of those who claim they are defending it? Are we to close our eyes to the deceptions, the harshness, the abominations in progress in Russia now in favor of the halcyon future that collectivized property may one day bring us? If so, how long do we have to wait and how many disasters do we have to swallow in silence?

The phrase *bureaucratized working-class state* kept recurring in Trotsky's words and I kept sitting there letting the word *bureaucracy* reverberate in my mind but with some highly contrary overtones. Why was Trotsky, with his life and family and reputation so devastated by the men who were running things in Russia, content to call what they were doing *bureaucracy*? It seemed to me I knew what a bureaucracy was and could recognize one when I came across it, with its files and its rules and red tape and its badly encumbered ways of rendering social service which violates the spirit in the course of honoring the letter. But surely that couldn't be the right word to describe what was happening in Soviet Russia: intimidation, deceit, restriction of freedom, unsupported condemnation, imprisonment, loss of life. This wasn't bureaucracy; this is something far more sinister.

What led Trotsky to this strange mismatching of words with facts? By then I was slowly advancing to the idea that there were two Leon Trotskys. The first one, who existed before the Bolshevik revolution, exercised a rangy and

critical mind resourcefully alert to the difference between radical dreams and hard facts. Had that been the Leon Trotsky with whom I was talking that afternoon in Coyoacán, I would have ripped the pretensions of the current Soviet government to shreds; he would have called an abomination an abomination with no hedging, no political syncretism, no misleading reservations. The second Leon Trotsky was a man who participated brilliantly in an insurrection that had human promise. In 1917, he was an intellectual and a theorist who was lifted to the summits of political and military power, he was the Red commander traveling in an armored train from front to front in the civil war, he was the man who saw the seizure of power and property synonymous with progress and social change.

I thus began to see Trotsky as spiritually and politically handcuffed to Bolshevik Leninism and all the more so because only by adhering to its principles could he put himself into a position to prosecute and redress the crimes committed against him by Stalin. The early Leon Trotsky could never, with his unsparing realism, have brought himself to believe and to preach that there could be democracy within the one party of a dictatorship. He would have pounced on any such idea as violating the most elementary probabilities: it would be only a matter of time before one man or faction got control of the party by claiming that the class enemy, no longer able to oppose the revolution from the outside, had now infiltrated the party and was opposing it from the inside. He would have been the first to perceive that no dictatorship that had achieved power by an insurrectionary coup could ignore the possibility that its opposition might also resort to violence. But there he sat speaking of the return of intra-party democracy in Russia as if it were a genuine possibility.

I wondered where the road of here and now that we had been travelling in a sane consensus that afternoon had forked so sharply as to leave me in one place and bring him to another, distant one. This was the second Leon Trotsky, the one who had tasted power and been transformed by it in a certain way. But the first Leon Trotsky still existed. I recalled the evening when we had had that difference of opinion about the future of *Partisan Review*, when someone at the table had asked him a question dealing with writing and politics. He shrugged and said with a certain amused irritation, "I don't know. Why ask me? I don't want to be a judge of cultural questions." In the context of the situation, it was meant to convey "Let us practice a certain kind of pluralism and not push judgment



isagreement too hard." I remember the idea kept growing on me that if everything that had befallen him since he was exiled to Príncipe had only fallen to the purview of the first Leon Trotsky, what a helpful and illuminated understanding of social possibilities it would have produced. It would have shed much light on the Russian revolution and given aid to those forces in the Western world that sincerely seek reform and betterment. It was not to be.

A day or two later I was standing at the railing of the terrace in front of the presidential palace in Chapultepec Park and musing on Popocatepetl and Ixtacihuatl in the distance. I was undoubtedly making progress in my mission to find signs and proofs of an eternal first day of creation: there were the twin summits as handsome as they must have been 20,000 years ago against the azure sky, and here was I as ready to bestow a warmly appreciative eye as any that had ever rested on them. Where, then, was the pinch? The pinch arose from the added deadweight that Trotsky's ideas were imposing on my effort to imagine a social order that could give body, form, and recognition to this eternal first day. I wasn't doing well in that respect at all. It was hard enough to locate and pinpoint those intimations of the eternal morning without fighting off the shadow that his notions threw on it. I felt a bit sheepish standing there gazing at the majestic volcanoes with the wish: say something, speak to me: whither the human race?

IT WAS ALMOST DARK one day when the porter knocked on my door with the news that there was a telephone call for me. It turned out to be Trotsky's secretary with an urgent request. Would I go to a certain pharmacy on Avenida Madero and get a certain drug and bring it out to Coyoacán as quickly as possible? Trotsky was having one of his ferocious headaches, and this drug was the only thing that gave him relief. No one on the staff could go at that moment, and I was the only one they could turn to: would I do it? He hated to ask it of me, but the old man was in much pain. I said I certainly would do it. I found the pharmacy, bought the medication, and boarded a crowded, antiquated bus (resurrected for a second life here in Mexico after having finished its first one in the United States) for the long hard ride to Coyoacán.

It was pitch dark when I left the bus, and the figure I noticed hurrying toward me turned out to be the secretary. "Have you got it?"

she whispered frantically. I handed her the package and she barely had it in her hand when she was hurrying off whispering, "Oh, bless you, I must run back, we'll pay you later." She vanished and I was left standing there with a sense of an innocent event suddenly gone ominous for reasons I couldn't know. Was Trotsky in that much pain that she thought she could get relief to him faster by fetching it from the bus stop to the house? Or was there something or someone in the house that I as an outsider and not even a close sympathizer had better not know about or see? Or perhaps with Trotsky too ill for conversation, what possible reason or incentive could there be for me to come to the house? It was something to think about on the long way back.

In a few minutes the bus that had brought me there was taking me back and the driver seemed to remember me and gave me a look: what strange business are you up to, *gringo*? It wasn't my stop yet when the bus reached the bright lights of Paseo de la Reforma and paused to discharge someone. My ears happened to catch the strains of a mariachi ensemble, and I impulsively left the bus and began to walk toward it. By then I had grown fond of mariachis and had begun to think of strolling minstrelsy as the hope of the world. I walked in the direction of the sound and there were marimba, bass guitar, middle guitar, and violin, in a rendition of a popular tune of the day, "*Aquella que va río abajo, se llama Panchita*." The lyrics were every bit as banal as any in our own folk music, but I was not inclined to cavil about that. It was music, and it fell in with an undefined theme I was carrying with me at the moment: the times are utterly hideous but there is music in the night. Crimped as it was aesthetically, it brought the unwritten poem in me to the surface and warmed me up. I stayed warm for the few blocks along Avenida Madero but just before I reached the corner where I had to turn right toward Calle Republica de San Salvador, my blood had occasion to chill and freeze quickly. A taxi had reached the corner a second before I did, and the door half opened to disclose a young woman struggling to escape from a man clutching her dress with his left hand and flourishing a pearl-handled revolver in his right. He pulled her back, the door slammed, the taxi sped away, and the whole thing was over before it could be said to have happened. That was one night I didn't fall asleep easily, stumbling over the humps and thumps left by impacts of rattling buses, heads in pain, pearl-handled revolvers, and reverberating marimbas.

"My ears happened to catch the strains of a mariachi ensemble, and I began to walk toward it. By then I had grown fond of mariachis and had begun to think of strolling minstrelsy as the hope of the world."



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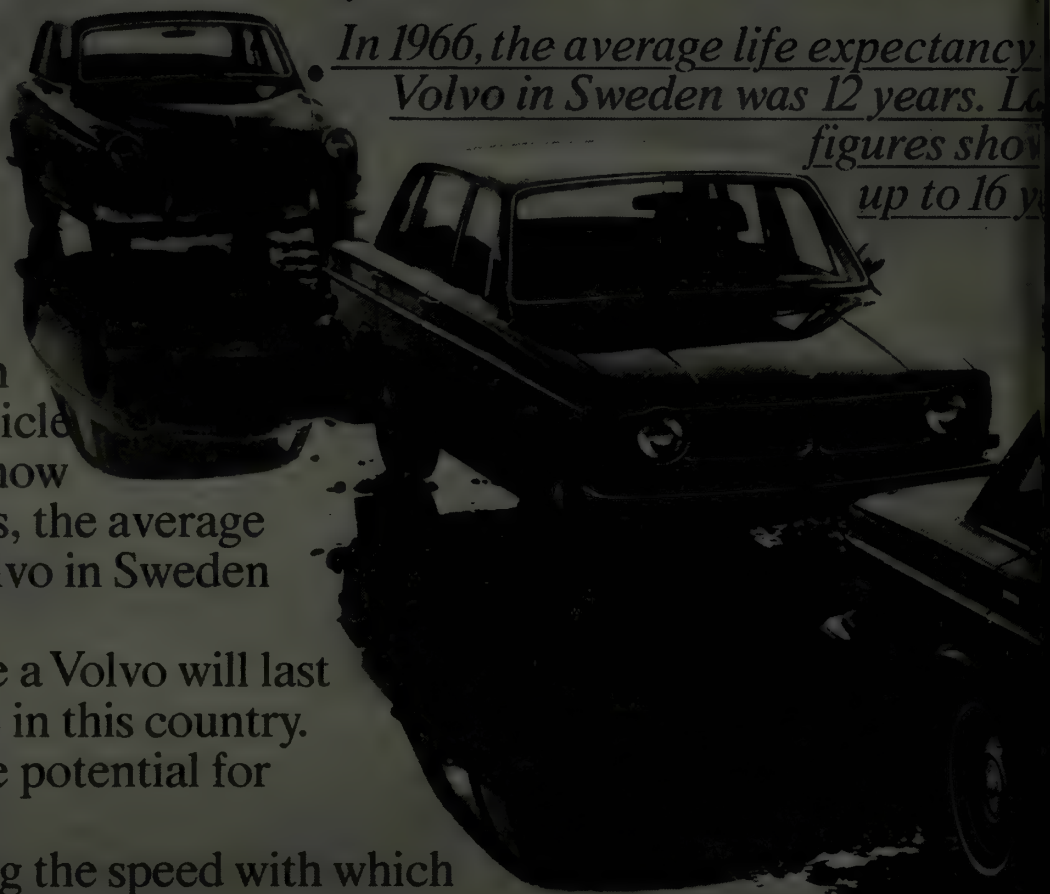
We've improved our entire suspension system. So you get a smooth ride...even over unimproved roads.

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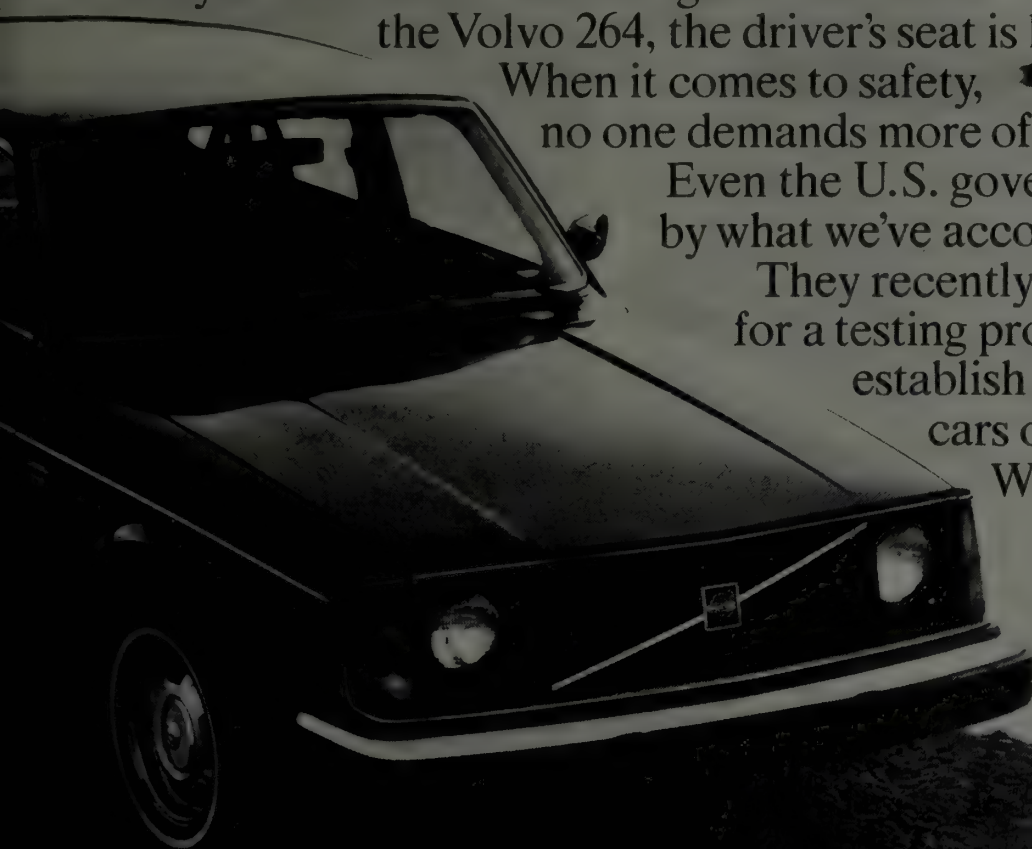
Even the U.S. government is impressed by what we've accomplished.

They recently bought 24 Volvos for a testing program that will help establish safety standards for cars of the future.

What all of this proves is simple.

A Volvo may last a long time.

But you'll get a lot more out of it than years.



**VOLVO**

The car for people who think.



Peter Berlinrut  
A TALK WITH  
TROTSKY

**T**HE ENLIGHTENING SEQUEL to this episode came several days later when I ran into the secretary at the American Express office. She told me Trotsky had learned who was his benefactor, and he hadn't liked it. He was touchy about the impression given by the press that he was lordly, that he was given to making free with people. He had shouted that he would have preferred to let the pain run its natural cycle rather than put himself in any position that might be misrepresented. This opened a door and she went on with one episode after another bearing on life in the household and Trotsky the man. For instance, Trotsky once lost his temper with one of his other secretaries and strode angrily out of the small room where they worked. A few minutes later a sobered and contrite Trotsky knocked on her door and opened it slightly to see if things had calmed sufficiently to permit a peace offering; concealed behind him was a bouquet of flowers he had picked in the patio which he proceeded to leave on her desk and walk out silently.

These stories confirmed for me that the earlier Leon Trotsky was alive, if not doing well. But my trouble was with the later Trotsky, the one who had led the November insurrection and who later tasted great power and believed that history had already vindicated the accuracy of his hypotheses. He was the one who upset me, he was the one I was beginning to think of as insurrection happy, whistling up revolts and insurgencies whose feasibility and advisability were doubtful, to put it mildly. I was well aware of the man who had written the history of the Russian revolution, I held in high esteem the man who had the wisdom to perceive that talk of proletarian art was preponderantly twaddle, that art needed detachment and contemplation and that the wrong suffered by man at the hands of man could be formed into art only after having been profoundly internalized as experience and then conveyed by aesthetic capability, not by doctrinaire zeal or propagandistic will. My problem was how to discover which tenets belonged to the earlier Trotsky and which to the later Trotsky in order to avoid embracing the second on the strength of the first.

We parted that morning after the secretary was done with her impulsive outpouring of life in the Trotsky ménage. My nerves were abuzz, and I was in no condition to go back to my room on Calle Republica de San Salvador, not with all its exotic birds in the patio, the little fig tree, or that middle-aged Joan of Arc who believed that voices and visions could be conveyed by piano music, smiles, and

sweetness, as well as by armor, horses, and crossbows. I had been trying to set down on paper where and when as a boy I first came to believe in an eternal and ongoing first day of creation and I wasn't doing too well. I was in no mood to work at it that morning. Instead I went to a nearby café, and sat down over a cup of coffee, and let myself sink away out of the world. That crowded and noisy place was the best place to do it because it guaranteed that I couldn't hide there forever, that eventually I would have to bestir myself and get on my way.

Set going by all this fresh talk of Trotsky and the kind of man he was, my mind drifted off by itself and went back to things he had said that didn't make sense. How in the name of even modest realism could he believe that if Stalin were ever ousted, Russia and its people would be willing to accept another one-party, no-opposition-permitted dictatorship? Wouldn't it have to be imposed upon them by force, so that they would be exchanging one imprisonment for another? What possible appeal could his Left Opposition and the Fourth International have for Russia? That its dictatorship would be just, benign, with nobody ever sent to Siberia to be cleansed of his social impurities? How could he possibly believe that? But then, considering his devout commitment to Bolshevik Leninism, how could he believe anything else? If ever there were a man to whom history had tendered a most pressing cue to revalue his role and his beliefs, it was Leon Trotsky. And the earlier Trotsky undoubtedly had the brilliance and the scope to carry out such a revaluation, but alas! he was overruled and suppressed by the later Trotsky, who had tasted power and been sealed and annealed inside a belief that power tells the story and rights all wrongs. The earlier man had lived by a realism that all human aspiration had to be remorselessly matched with the actual likelihood that governed its realization, but the later man believed that without power seized by force and maintained by force, there was nothing. The earlier Trotsky would have pointed a finger at Stalin and cried, "Evil and inhuman fiend!" The later Trotsky cried, "Political bungler! Begetter of defeats!" Motivation, intentions, inner states did not count with Bolshevik Leninism, only objective consequences. This was a view that couldn't be pleased enough with itself and its unsparing realism, that ended up as a cataclysmic fatuity.

Even with slow and occasional sippings, I was on my third cup of coffee, sitting there and musing on this painful subject. What would I have done, had I been a public man



in Russia in 1917? I wanted to think I would have tried to work out some *modus vivendi* with the Revolutionary Socialists, the Mensheviks, the Constitutional Democrats, anybody who was vowed against the monarchy and tyranny. I would guess that was about how the majority of the Russian people felt then, delighted and intoxicated to be out of the feudal darkness. But I am that which Lenin and Trotsky and the Bolsheviks despised *à outrance*: a born compromiser. In politics anyway, and within certain limits. I would have said, we have a little experience in working a parliamentary democracy in our duma, let us begin from that and do the best we can. If that means frustrating babel and chaos, let us nevertheless stay with it until we get enough of a consensus to resolve a particular issue. Let us socialize that which cries out to be socialized and clearly suffers from not being socialized, let us leave in private hands that which seems best off in private hands. Above all, let us write large into our new society and into our very marrow that which is the one great beacon emergent from the age-old experience of people with people: a Bill of Rights. Offer me heaven without a Bill of Rights and I will answer; keep it: heaven without a Bill of Rights becomes hell. On the other hand, hell with a Bill of Rights can set about transforming itself. Exploitation? There is no way of ending it by fiat or mechanical arrangement; there is no way to keep the brainy and energetic ones from establishing material advantages over others (and then heaping insult on injury by claiming this was nature's plan). But with a Bill of Rights intact, there is always an opportunity and an obligation to work to suppress and reform. My credo: *vive la réforme, et plus de la réforme, et toujours la réforme!* I don't know who chill me more, those proclaiming the millennium is to be achieved in a month or five years or ten, or those who insist it can never be achieved.

Sitting in the café that morning I was only too aware that whatever I might have said if I had been in Russia in 1917 would have had all the durability of a candle flame in a cloud-burst. I would likely have been a person trying to open a door of a building full of people eager to get out: trampled in a wild rush. But then again, maybe not. I was fairly sure that if Trotsky had been sitting there across the table from me and heard out my position he probably would have torn it to shreds. I sensed that in general he had a deprecating view of American pragmatism; to him Marxist-Leninist dialectics opened up great human vistas whereas we were fated to live intellectually from hand to mouth—no great doctrines, no

great hypotheses. I could not feel the loss. I could only feel that if I could complete the process of rediscovering the eternal first day or at least make substantial progress in that direction, that would be all the doctrine, all the hypothesis I needed. It was almost noon when I walked out of the café that day, with a feeling of time gone awry, of having wrestled with an antagonist I never meant to engage. I had not come to Mexico to hearken to the voice of politics.

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### Into the future

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**T**HE LAST TIME I ever saw Trotsky or visited that house in Coyoacán was during a news conference he had called in connection with some important event early in 1938. He answered the questions of the correspondents and reporters who filled the room, very much the *magister politicus* expounding doctrine as it bore on some point. Mr. Trotsky, do you believe that Soviet Russia can catch up and surpass the United States in industrial productivity? Mr. Trotsky, do you believe there is a stable base for the alliance between Hitler and Mussolini? Mr. Trotsky, what would you have done to avoid the repression of the dictatorship if you had been in power? Mr. Trotsky, how do you envision the removal of Stalin from power? I don't remember the answers so clearly, but it was my impression they were skilled and well thought out. He said one thing which haunted me for years and which I never forgot because of the dark days when it seemed as if his prophecy would be untrue. He was asked, "Mr. Trotsky, what do you see as the future of Nazi Germany?" He thought for a moment and then answered, "Hitler is a blind man walking with much confidence straight over a precipice."

The news conference did not end formally but trickled on after its main portion, lasting about an hour, was over. Several reporters stayed on to question Trotsky in greater detail. I didn't say a word to him that afternoon, nor he to me. Instead I got into conversation with Natalya, his wife, who knew little English then, and no Spanish, so that I had to use my rusty French. There was stuttering, there were halts, there were puzzled looks, but we managed. She was patient and so was I, and when she understood I was bestowing praise on the red bougainvillea so tall over the fence, she smiled and was pleased. She liked flowers, she liked gardening and we walked out into the patio, where she pointed out things. Natalya was out of that Russian tradition in which life

**"The earlier Trotsky would have pointed a finger at Stalin and cried, 'Evil and inhuman fiend!' The later Trotsky cried, 'Political bungler! Better off than you!'** "



Peter Berlinrut  
A TALK WITH  
TROTSKY

was fealty to a cultural idea or it was nothing, and in her case the idea was Leon Trotsky and the revolution. She seemed muted and long-suffering and extended an acceptance to everything around her, the flowers in the patio, the press people, the forced jumps from Russia to Turkey to France to Norway to Mexico to wherever asylum might lie, the chain of disasters that had befallen them, all as within the fate implicit in the cultural idea they served. Yes, she would very much like to visit the United States even if only for a few days, and yes, she hoped the American government would change its position and grant such a visa. And I gathered that Trotsky too very much wanted to visit it and would offer every assurance that he would not engage in politics of any sort for the duration of his visit. It was a pleasant conversation and in ten or fifteen minutes we were back in the house, where one or two more press persons were still talking to Trotsky. I felt it was time to leave and I was never there again.

IT WAS SHORTLY AFTER that news conference that my personal mission to Mexico came to an abrupt and unexpected end. One night I wandered into a movie house to be distracted by whatever they were showing. At some moment before or after the film a newsreel came on the screen and included of all things, a clip of New York's Central Park under snow. It was a night scene and the camera moved slowly along a walk pausing at trees with boughs laden with snow, everything softly illuminated with haloes made by diffracted light from nearby street lamps. The effect on me was electric: I was assailed by violent homesickness and decided on the spot I would leave the next day. I hadn't been living in New York then but it symbolized home. I knew that instant that I had accumulated as large a dossier of evidence for the reality of an eternal first day of life as ever I could or would there in Mexico and that it was time to go.

The next day I said goodbye to the exotic birds in the patio, to that woman somewhat obsessed to bring the gospel to the world through piano music and sweetness of conduct, to the porter and his family, to the valiant little fig tree, to everything. The *pianiste* gave me a leather trinket with the Aztec calendar on it, I gave her some books, and I walked out of the patio and into the lobby thinking, goodbye, dear things, goodbye, dear people, I am headed home. I paused in the lobby and tried to call the house in Coyoacán but without success. The line was either busy

or out of order and I finally gave up, walking away with the quitter's self-pitying rationalization, oh, well, they'll never miss me any way! By then I was very much the doubting postulant with the very last shred of belief dissipated by the very act of the bishop expounding the logic of the faith. By then Trotsky's very act of bringing insurrectionary politics up close to where I could see it and feel it starkly was an act that dissipated its every last vestige of promise and of hope. Did that mean that I was permanently closed to a belief in insurrectionary politics? No, not necessarily. If I could feel that human society as it found itself in a given moment was ripe and ready to install something better than the oppressive arrangements it lived by and was prevented from doing so peaceably by an oppressive minority, all right. But accepting a series of schematics in which an alleged oppressor was alleged to be operating in such a way as to leave his alleged victims no way to freedom and relief except to overthrow the alleged oppressors and install their dictatorship which they alleged would lead to a more humane order was to hang too much on allegedness. To accept that private ownership of the means of production, of itself and by itself, was the basic evil of modern life? No.

It was a long bus ride from Mexico City to Dallas and the amount of changing space left behind by the turning wheels was quite dumbfounding. Orderly memory, orderly mental life was out of the question. All that could reach me in that state of lulled numbness were the ragtag and bobtail of a once clear attentiveness. One such item was the phrase "future of mankind." It kept floating around in the air like a housefly I was too drowsy to shoo away. Trotsky had used it once or twice during the first two visits I had with him and it kept recurring with none of the context in which it had lodged. It hung in the air, idly by itself as if it were my overlulled mind's ironic summary of all that I was carrying away from my experience in the house in Coyoacán, as if it were my skeptical and semi-comatose comment on a kind of sad cottage industry being carried on there by Trotsky and his staff. I remember snapping out of it as if humiliated by my own feckless cynicism. It struck me like a sharp cold wind that in what Trotsky was doing and thinking and saying in that house in Coyoacán, in the bitter odds against which he went on doing it, he was addressing himself to a human future at a cost unequaled by anyone I knew or heard of. And that was something neither I nor anyone else who thought him wrong could take away from him. □





# The House of Angels

A story by Ella Leffland

**M**AY 27, 1954—Two minutes past midnite so it's my wedding day, I should be getting my beauty sleep. But I haven't written anything down for a long time and I won't have time when I'm married, so this will be good-bye. Babe's asleep on the cot, I've got a newspaper stuck against the lamp so not to wake him, I keep thinking what's going to happen to him.

I know he got off to a bad start with his name, he came along last, number nine, and they just called him Babe, like they just called me Sissy, but when I was ten years old I gave myself this name I liked, Sandra, and I asked Babe what name would you like? He said Donald, I don't know where he got hold of it, and I started calling him Donald, but he said it didn't count that I'd just call him it, so I said when I grew up and went to Kansas City I'd take him along and he could start off fresh there being Donald, but he said it would be too late then. Nothing satisfies him, like if he was awake now I know he'd be wishing I wasn't even here in my rightful room with him.

We're not alike. I'm blond and attractive, not to sound vain, where he's puny and red-headed. He was the runt of the litter and he was hanging onto Ma all day, even when she went down to the outhouse, and we'd have to come and drag him away, but she didn't

favor him. For one thing she was too tired to be bothered, and for another I don't think he was our Pa's child because the rest of us were all blond like peas in a pod, and it used to grate on her when Pa said, For a tired woman you sure get a few things done, but he didn't really care, I think he was short on brains. I didn't get my brains from Pa. None of we kids got past the eighth grade, but I was always writing diaries and stories and things, and now I have finished up my high school diploma at nite school. I believe in self betterment, and it was me who took pity on Babe and tried to install him with my philosophy of life and call him Donald and everything, but it never took. All he really wanted to do when he wasn't hanging onto Ma was to sit on this sagging old bed in the kitchen that he shared with Earl and Brother, with this old crummy blanket over his head, and daydream and pick fleas off the cat.

Pa died in '48 and our Ma went the next year with a growth the size of a cantaloupe, it was what made her so tired. I came here to Kansas City and went to work at Woolworth's in the hardware section, and Babe was sent to the County Home on account of being under eighteen, but he never liked the place, he said he didn't like the building. Last year when he turned eighteen and I turned twenty-one he got let out in my care and I got

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him a room down the hall from me and got him work as a busboy in a cafeteria, but he dropped things all over and they fired him. Then I got him work as an usher in a movie house and I thought it would be wonderful because he could watch the movies, but he said he didn't like the building, and also he didn't like the candy counter girl, he said she made eyes at him. I got mad then, it was the most modern show in town with big mirrors and murals on the walls, and I also thought he should be grateful if the candy counter girl made eyes at him because god knew he wasn't exactly Laurence Olivier. I tried to install him with my attitude, I told him he ought to look on the bright side and treat the candy counter girl to a terrific evening on the town but he said there wasn't a girl alive he'd treat to a terrific evening, anyway he got fired for having b.o.

ALL THIS TIME I wasn't exactly a wallflower, but I'm very choosy, I believe a man should have good manners. A lot of men start cracking their knuckles if a girl gets enthusiastic about anything but them, they can talk their heads off about sports or just hanging around some billiard room and you're supposed to hang on every word even if you're bored to death, and if you start to say, Well I had an interesting experience the other day, a lady came into hardware who looked exactly like Ingrid Bergman, they start cracking their knuckles. I've passed up a lot of dates to great places because of that. My fiancé has got good manners and he's intelligent in his own way, he's a garage mechanic, his name is Don Lemoyne, and in a few hours I'll be Mrs. Donald R. Lemoyne. Babe has never liked Don I think because of the name, he begrudges anybody else having it, also he doesn't like Don because Don keeps telling him he ought to join the army. But I know the army wouldn't ever want Babe because besides not being very smart his feet are flat, I mean like a penguin's. But Babe says he doesn't want to join the army because he doesn't like army buildings. What the h—, Don says, buildings shmuilings, he thinks Babe's crazy, he has also pointed out that Babe has taken advantage of me, and I have to admit this is true. But if I don't watch out for him, who will? None of the other kids. I don't even know where they are anymore except for Brother and Viola, and Brother has been in the state asylum for six years and Viola married high up and only has me over once a year when her husband's away on business, and never

Babe. Because on top of everything else Babe's dirty, in fact it's the worst thing of all, he never takes a bath, he says he's afraid of a chill, but the real reason is that he likes dirt. I think the world is too clean for Babe, that's why he's so unhappy. Ma was a dirty housekeeper, it sounds mean to say but it's true, I was glad to get away but I think Babe misses the mess.

But what I was getting to is where Don always says Babe should join the army, I always thought he should fall in love, love makes you put your best foot forward not to mention how optimistic it makes you feel. So I made Babe clean up and introduced him to a couple of my girlfriends but he never opened his mouth and when I asked him afterwards why he was so rude he just shrugged. Don't you ever want to fall in love and get married, I asked him, and he said who cares about love? Someday you'll eat those words, I said, when you fall in love and you're so filled with it you're not fit to be around, don't worry it happens to everybody. It won't happen to me, he said, and to tell the truth I didn't really think it would either. I was just wishing it would so he would change his ways. I was getting fed up with him. On top of being dirty and a wet blanket he was out of work so much I had to pay his rent half the time. Once when I mentioned this he said he would gladly find some other room because he didn't like my building anyway, well this building, it's not new but at least it's clean and there are venetian blinds instead of torn shades, so I said Who are you not to like this building? But you can't talk with him, he drives me out of my mind. But the thing is I've always felt sorry for him and his hair even began to go thin last year and he's got little wrinkles around his eyes already and just nineteen years old.

He looks like life has passed him by, especially when you're in the middle of preparing to get married and full of plans, we're just going to City Hall and no honeymoon til Don's vacation in July, but I bought a white suit and shoes to match, not to mention packing and everything because we're moving into an apartment next week. I guess in a way I thought I'd meet somebody more up my alley but I never did in the three years I've been here, and Don has got a lot going for him, he's steady on the job and is nice about things other men might not be, like making frames for my movie star pictures out of folded cigarette packages, that's not simple. Anyway, when you're a bride-to-be, Babe looks all left out and empty, a stranger would say to look at him, What if he died, he wouldn't have lived at all. But that's the funny thing because he



nally did have a love affair and when it ended it nearly killed him. He's been laying in that cot like a corpse for four days, ever since it ended.

**I**T STARTED WITH sometimes he liked to take long walks by himself and once I followed him because I wasn't sure what he might be up to. He walked over to the slummy section of town but he didn't even tick around the normal part, he went to the part that was being torn down for new housing, what a horror, just rubble all over the place like the newsreels of the Korean War, but there were some buildings left standing here and there. He went up to one and drank in, it was an old rooming house with a sign that said THE HOUSE OF ANGELS because of these two plaster of Paris angels outside an upstairs window, they had bird droppings on their heads and they were white there but the rest was gray and mildewy looking, and they looked loose, like they were ready to fall down, the whole house did, it gave me the creeps.

One day after Babe lost his latest job as a hotel dishwasher I gave him his rent money for the landlady and when I came home from work that nite he was gone with the money and he had left a note for me saying, Don't be worried, I am going to be very happy (only he didn't spell it like that, he can't spell).

At first I was so boiling mad I didn't care where he'd gone but after a week I got to worry and on my day off I went to find him, and I went first thing to that Angel House. An old man about ninety-five years old answered the door stinking of beer even though it was in the morning, he was dirtier than Babe ever was and with brown stumps for teeth and long yellow fingernails like horn. I asked for Babe and sure enough he jerked his thumb up and said room nine, and I went inside practically having to hold my nose, it smelled of damp and garbage and beer all mixed up. Upstairs I knocked on Babe's door but nobody answered so I walked in and there he was laying on this crummy bed with a smile on his face. Hello Babe I said, but he didn't answer, he didn't even look surprised to see me. It was a terrible room, brown wallpaper hanging in tatters and linoleum on the floor with big holes in it and a dirty sink in the corner with a half naked hula doll hanging on the wall next to it, I can bet Babe didn't put it there, and the bed sagged in the middle almost to the floor and there weren't any sheets, just an old threadbare blanket. This was the room behind the two angels and he

had pulled up the window for a view of their heads and all the rubble in the distance.

Babe, I said, you ran off with the rent money, how could you, you were never dishonest. I couldn't help it, he said.

You had a nice room and good dinners with me on my hot plate, why would you run off to this awful hole?

He said it wasn't an awful hole.

It is so, are you blind or what? I asked.

He said, If you don't like it you can go.

I was surprised, he never used to have a quick tongue, and I looked him over careful. There was something funny about his face, better, I don't know what, but his clothes were the worst ones he owned, a gray tee shirt with billions of holes and pants all ragged at the pockets, he was barefoot too and his soles were black, you pick up an extra lot of dirt with flat feet. He was going downhill fast.

I told him that.

I'm not going downhill, he said and he ran

**"Someday you'll eat those words, I said, when you fall in love and you're so filled with it you're not fit to be around, don't worry it happens to everybody. It won't happen to me, he said."**





Ella Leffland  
THE HOUSE  
OF ANGELS

his hand over that old blanket like it was silk. He said, I want you to leave me alone, I'm happy here.

Well you can't live here forever on that money you took, I told him.

He said the rent was cheap.

I should certainly hope so, I said with a bitter laugh, but sarcasm is lost on Babe. Anyway, I told him, they're going to tear it down.

He said, They won't tear it down. Mr. Olafson, that was the old man downstairs, told him that they wouldn't.

All he wants is for some silly fool to pay him rent until they do, I said. Why don't you use your head, Babe, when they put up the new housing do you think they'll want a stinking house like this in the middle?

It's not a stinking house, he said and he was mad. He was touchier than I ever saw him before.

Well I can't stand it, I said, I feel dirty all over and I'm going.

Good, he said, and he went over and looked out the window like a king looking down at his gardens and goldfish ponds.

I stopped at the kitchen downstairs, I won't even describe it, and I said, Mr. Olafson is it true what you told my brother Babe that they're not going to tear this building down?

Who knows, sister? he said to me, I live each day like it comes. He was punching cockroaches on the wall and saying Gotcha! each time, it gave me the creeps.

WHEN DON CAME OVER the next nite I told him everything and asked him to go over there and try to get Babe to move out. He came back later and he said, Sandra it beats me how you who are so clean and high-minded can be related to that kid, he was sitting on the bed wrapped up in a blanket with just the moonlight coming through the window and those crazy statues outside and he jumped up and yelled For Christ's sake who said you could come barging in here, like I'd interrupted him in a big clinch with Rita Hayworth. I never saw him act like that, he looked like he was filled with electricity.

Did you talk to him? I asked.

How could I talk to him, Don said, he run me out of the room.

My feeble brother Babe, he ran you out of the room?

He had some bread and a breadknife and he threatened me with the knife, oh I could have easy taken it away from him but I thought why bother? I tell you, Sandra, I

think we ought to sic the authorities on him.

What kind of authorities, I asked.

Authorities from an asylum, he said.

That made me mad, but I was mad at Babe too. I let things slide for awhile then about two weeks later on my day off I went there again just to see if he had improved any or slid down further.

Ain't (he still says ain't) you ever learned not to come barging into a room, he asked me, and when I plumped down into this crumpled old chair he said, Watch how you treat that chair.

Do you realize we could have the authorities cart you away, I asked him, but he paid no heed, his eyes were roaming around the room like it was the face of some girl. He has plenty of whiskers now, they're red, and he looked dirtier than ever but he looked good too, like he had filled out. I said, How come you look like you filled out?

He said Mr. Olafson and him ate good, he said Mr. Olafson didn't make skimpy little salads like me and just a chop with all the fat cut off, he made big pots of stew.

Cat stew, I said sarcastically.

Rabbit stew, he said, Mr. Olafson got a rabbit hutch out back.

Ugh, I said, didn't you get enough rabbit stew when we were kids? Besides, he's not supposed to have rabbits inside the city limits.

We ain't inside the city limits, he said, slow like a priest, this is the house of angels high up in the sky.

You're talking crazy now, Babe, I said, he gave me the creeps, but I have to admit he looked good when he said it. As long as I could remember his eyes were those sleepy kind of eyes but now they were bright like two blue lights and I thought gosh he has nice eyes after all.

But I kept to my aim and I said, Look I've come to install you with some sense, no don't roll your eyes and look bored, it isn't healthy for you to sit here doing nothing all day in this filth, how long do you think it can go on?

Always, he said like a lovesick goon, there was no reasoning with him.

I had brought him some carrots and bananas and a carton of cottage cheese and I gave him the bag even though I was hurt by what he had said about my salads and chops they are very tasty and nutritious, but he didn't even open the bag and I bet he never did. But I told him I was going to come every single week til the place was torn down and bring him decent food.

He said, Don't bother, but I did, every week on my day off I brought him fruit and vegetables, also I brought him sheets and a clean



blanket, five bars of soap and a towel, he never used any of it.

Once when I came he was sound asleep so I snuck down to the kitchen and got a bucket and mop from Mr. Olafson, he said, What do you want with those, sister? but I ignored him. That mop was as dry as a bone, but it hadn't seen use for ten years, well I filled the bucket with water from Babe's sink and started mopping the floor when he woke up in a split second. I never saw him act the way he did then, he came leaping out of the bed and he grabbed that mop and tried to break it across his knee, only he couldn't, so he threw it down and yelled, Sandra never come back here and try to louse up my life! And suddenly I was glad he had fallen in love even if it was only with a building and even if it didn't make him cleaner, only dirtier. At least like Don said it gave him some electricity.

So I said, Honey I don't want to louse you up I want to help you but if you don't want me to I won't come anymore.

That's fine, he said, Thank you very much Sandra.

It was the first time I ever heard him be polite, will wonders never cease I asked myself as I went out.

I kept my promise too. I never went to visit him anymore.

He lived there nearly four months on that rent money he didn't pay our landlady, I don't know what would have happened when he ran out of money but before that could happen they tore the place down. On one of my first visits I stuck my phone number on Mr. Olafson's kitchen wall with a tack in case Babe was ever sick or something, and four nights later Mr. Olafson called up and said they were going to tear the house down the next morning and Babe wouldn't leave.

I got Don to drive me out and there was Mr. Olafson with all his things piled in a rickety old car, ready to leave. He took us upstairs, he told us Babe had locked the door but Don is strong and he butted his shoulder against it til it broke open. Babe was sitting on the bed with his blanket around him and that butcher knife Don told me about in his hand. What's this Babe, I said, you want to be torn down with the building tomorrow?

Leave me alone, he said.

Put that knife down and come with us please, Babe, I said as sweet as I could, you can stay with me tonight and I'll set up a cot for you, but he didn't even let me finish, he just shouted Leave me alone again.

Don got mad and he said, Do you realize how you're upsetting your sister? She's getting

married in a few days and she's keyed up enough as it is.

But Babe paid no heed to this, he just stuck his chin out, and then Mr. Olafson said he had to get going and he looked at Babe and he said, Listen here I don't know why you want to stay on in this dump but you better get a move on.

Babe scrambled halfway across the bed. Dump! he yelled, how can you say that, you been here longer than me, eight years, how could you say that?

I guess it struck him odd that Mr. Olafson didn't hold the house in the same esteem he did, maybe he thought because Mr. Olafson was as dirty as he was that he looked at things the same way. But I could tell that Mr. Olafson didn't care much about anything, he just gave a shrug and walked out.

I was cold standing there and there wasn't even any light on, I made to turn on the light but Babe jumped up with his knife so I didn't. I whispered to Don to take the knife away but he said, Now Sandra we've got to go careful, and he pulled up the chair for me and he sat down on the floor, and the moonlight was coming through the window and everything was quiet and creepy.

We sat there in that room all nite trying to talk sense into Babe, I was fed up with both of them, practically more with Don. Once I got so impatient I made to take away the knife myself but Babe was wild, he didn't respect it that I was his own sister and he said he'd cut me if I took another step, then I guess Don was ashamed so he tried a couple times but only halfhearted, then he started being cautious again. What do you think you're gaining? he asked Babe, you'll have to leave when the wreckers come.

They won't come, Babe said.

You're living in a fool's paradise, I told him, they'll come any time now. It was getting light when I said that, my god that room looked awful in the grayness, even Babe looked gray, he was gulping in the room like a glass of wine somebody was going to snatch away from under his nose. I was so fed up I could have killed them both, I think the only reason I stayed all nite was because Don kept saying, Come on Sandra let's go.

**"That room looked awful in the grayness, even Babe looked gray, he was gulping in the room like a glass of wine somebody was going to snatch away from under his nose."**

**W**HEN THE SUN WAS all red I said, Babe you've got to come on, the wreckers will be here any minute. No they won't, he said, and I began to believe him because it got to be nine o'clock and ten o'clock and nothing happened, the room was bright with





Thomas Edison reminiscing in 1928, at age 81, is portrayed by actor Pat Hingle in a unique series of television commercials. One is reprinted here. You can see many of the others on upcoming GE television specials.



# Will there ever be another Thomas Edison?

*Here's what we think Edison himself would have said:*

*"Some people have called my generation the 'Generation of Genius'.*

*In just the fifty years between 1875 and 1925, we developed the telephone, the electric light, the radio, the automobile, the airplane, motion pictures, the x-ray.*

*It's surprising how many of these things General Electric and I have been involved in.*

*Now people are saying that there's nothing left to be discovered. That there won't be any more big inventions.*

*That's nonsense.*

*No generation has any monopoly on genius.*

*Every generation will have its geniuses like Steinmetz, Alexanderson, Langmuir... maybe even an Edison.*

*Today, in 1928, there are still problems to be solved.*

*The oil and gas we have won't last forever. We're going to have to find a new source of energy. Langmuir thinks the atom may be the answer.*

*And take the airplane. Between 1903 and 1928 they've made tremendous strides in improving it. But it still doesn't fly far enough or fast enough. We ought to develop a plane that can go from coast to coast in hours.*

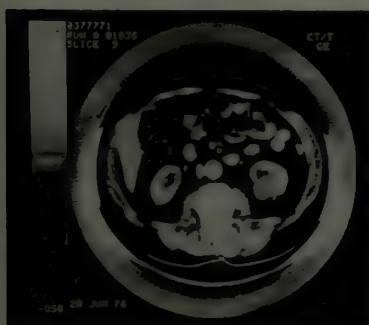
*William Coolidge has already put electricity to work in hospitals with his x-ray. But I think that's just the beginning of what electricity can do in medicine.*

*Many of these things they're working on right now at the General Electric Research Lab in Schenectady.*

*I expect GE will keep hiring the best people they can find and keep giving them their heads. And they're going to keep coming up with answers.*

*I have no pessimism about the future.*

*As a friend of mine says, 'I object to people running down the future. I'm going to live all the rest of my life there.'"*



*Since Dr. Coolidge developed the modern x-ray tube, General Electric researchers have worked to improve it and also develop new kinds of diagnostic equipment. The latest example is Computed Tomography, a totally new kind of x-ray system. It gives cross-sectional views of the body (shown here). This makes it possible to see parts of the body that could never be seen before without surgery.*

Progress for People.

GENERAL  ELECTRIC



Ella Leffland  
THE HOUSE  
OF ANGELS

sunshine and all three of us looked like death and we all hated each other so much it wasn't even funny. I hate to think about it but I called Don a coward and we began to yell at each other, forgetting all about Babe, and then suddenly a couple of men walked in.

This place is supposed to be vacated, one of them said.

Don't we know it, I yelled, that's my brother over there, he won't leave. Babe held the knife up like he had been doing all nite but they walked over to him and one of them snatched it out of his hand in a wink, it was as simple as that, I gave Don a dirty look but he was already going over to help them yank Babe off the bed. Babe turned over on his stomach and held onto the mattress and they all three went to work on him, I really hated to see it, they had to pry him off and he was yelling bloody murder all the time but finally they got him off and as they dragged him out of the room he kept trying to grab things along the way, the chair, the sink, the tatters on the wall. I followed them downstairs and I wondered how we'd ever get him into the car but when we got outside he suddenly gave up like a horse that's just been broken, he got into the car as quiet as you please and we drove away and he turned around and looked at the house til it was out of sight.

I put my arm around him and I said, Now we'll go home and have some breakfast and you can stay with me for a few days. I accepted it that he couldn't ever be happy in a normal place, might as well let him have it his own way, so I said Listen honey we're going to find you a nice dirty room in the slum district.

He looked me right in the eye and he said It won't be the same.

For Christ's sake a room's a room, Don said.

You marry Sandra, Babe said, why did you choose her instead of somebody else, is anybody else the same as her?

It was the most intelligent thing I ever heard him say.

But Don said, It's not the same thing, Sandra is a person, and he began saying very nice things about me. I admit all nite in Babe's room I came close to breaking off with Don but now I realized I had been under a terrible strain, besides we already had the ring and the license and the girls at the store already gave me a kitchen shower.

We got Babe up to my room and set up the cot and he fell right down on it and closed his eyes and Don took me back out to the car and he said, Sandra you can't take him to a room in the slum section, it wouldn't be a

normal healthy life, he'd fall to pieces and die young, you can't let him do it. Besides, there's the rent, you know he can't hold a job. Well after he left I thought about it and it sounds mean to go back on my word to Babe but Don is right, so what we're going to do is day after tomorrow take him back to the County Home, it's only for kids under eighteen but if they can't take him they'll turn him over to some other place. It sounds hard but there's nothing else I can do, a year ago I wouldn't have done it but then I still had hope for him. Now you can't even get him off the cot, it's like he was dead and laid out, except he moans and groans. But yesterday I came home from work and he was gone, it scared me but pretty soon he came back with a sack. What's in that sack Babe, I asked but he just shoved it under the cot, so when he was asleep I dragged it out and snuck a look. Inside was the head of one of those angels, close up the eyes were funny looking with no circle or dot on the eyeballs so that you got the feeling they were staring but you didn't know what at. I put it back in the sack and shoved it under the bed again.

I've got to end this now, it's four a.m., I'll look all fagged out at my own wedding, but I can't sleep and it's not that I'm keyed up, Don said I was keyed up enough as it is but I'm not, that's the funny thing. Maybe I should have waited longer for Mr. Right to come along, somebody who made me feel different inside like Laurence Olivier makes me feel, but I read in a magazine that that's infatuation, and Don is clean and clear-headed as well as being steady on the job but I keep waiting for some big feeling. But we've already got the apartment, we're moving in next week, it's not too cute or anything but I'm going to fix it up, I've got a knack, and then as soon as we can afford it we're going to move into a brand new tract house, nobody else would ever have lived there before, no old dirt to wash away, and I can see myself sitting on the front lawn with a baby, it's not exactly exciting to work in hardware at Woolworth's all your life, and as far as movies go they're always happening to somebody else, I want something to happen to *me*, something big that sticks me up in the clouds, and here it is only seven hours til I'm Mrs. Donald R. Lemoyne and I'm not even keyed up. But I read in that magazine that every girl starts wondering if she's doing the right thing just before the wedding, it's natural. I ought to stop writing now, I'll look like something the cat dragged in, anyway the lamp is flickering on and off, it's a bad connection. Babe just woke himself up, he cries out in his sleep. □





## A SHRIVEL OF CRITICS

Modest proposals for reviewers

by Anthony Burgess

**H**AVING JUST completed twenty years as a professional writer, having published thirty-odd books, having seen all of those books reviewed pretty widely if not deeply, I should by now have become unmoved and unmovable by the snarls of the *Kalamazoo Courier*, the condescension of the *North Charleston Examiner*, the qualified imputations of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. But no; I can still be hurt, and the wounds are not easily palliated by the praise of *Time*, the enthusiasm of *Newsweek*, the hysteria of *The Village Voice*. Authors are a touchy and ungrateful lot. They take appreciation or granted, especially when it comes from reputable critics (learned and humane men who are, in a sense, so the author feels, of the author's own family); let some wretched provincial back fire a stink bomb, and no more creative work is done that day, the clouds hang heavy, the gin bottle is swiftly emptied. I have just published a book, and my publisher has sent me a batch of reviews whose miasma hit me in the chest on the mere slitting of the envelope. Here we go again, for the thirty-oddth time. An ungrateful lot, but also gluttons for punishment.

I don't really mind a book-page headline like NEW BURGESS A BORE. That strikes me as having a certain selling potential: it is unequivocal; it makes boringness a highly positive vice, like dirtiness; it may even send me, sick of every other vice and perhaps now ready for boredom, running to the bookstalls. But what I do mind is "This novel demonstrates nothing except Burgess's ignorance of Italian." That is unfair to my wife, who is not

only Italian but a *dottorressa* of Bologna and Rome. There is a lot of Italian in the new book—inevitably, since it has an Italian setting—and my wife was responsible for every word. The same reviewer says (obviously eaten up by this Italian business): "*Spaghetti* may be a plural in Italian, but in English it is a singular." This is meant to be a rebuke to me, who am merely responsible for creating a character who says that *spaghetti* is a plural in English. My own views on the matter do not appear in the book, but I give them now for what they're worth: in English, *spaghetti* ought to be singular. The way it is served in Anglo-Saxon countries it is usually singular anyway.

On second thoughts, I *do* mind that headline.

I could go on with the most delectable instances of imperfect understanding of the book, personal rancor, Anglophobia (always a big factor with provincial reviewers), but my purpose here is to be constructive, not petulant. I have been a reviewer of novels myself, for nearly the twenty years in which I have been a novelist, and I have learned a little about the craft. Let me pass on, to reviewers in Oregon, the Dakotas, Nevada, and other territories far from the heart of culture (viz., the vertical Europe which is Manhattan), some elementary tips.

**F**IRST, IF YOU ARE given a book for review, you should always review the book you are given and not (a) the book you seem to be given in the blurb or (b) the book your memory tells you you

have read when you have read it, if you have read it. Reliance on memory has made at least two reviewers of my latest book state, in otherwise well-considered and, incidentally, laudatory reviews, that my hero marries his dead wife's sister, when, in fact, it is his wife's niece he marries. This is perhaps a small matter, since neither marriage trespasses against the ordinances posted in church porches, but either reviewer (or both, since one probably copied the error from the other) might have made him marry his own niece, which would alter the flavor of the entire book. Under (a), I remember that the blurb of my very first novel presented one of its main characters as a police sergeant when in fact he was a police lieutenant. This made some reviewers irritably blame me, the author, not him, the blurb-writer, for inconsistency and utter solemn general warnings about the need for a novelist to go over his work very, very carefully before submitting it to a publisher. But, as every author knows, the true difficulties of a book begin when the book has been written, and the blurb is only one of the difficulties.

Second, read with your ear and not your eye. The above paragraph may seem to you to be a very cacophonous piece of writing (cacoscopic really) if you read it only with your eye. Read it aloud and you will find that it sounds like human speech and is not unmelodious. When you condemn a writer's prose style, remember what Ernest Newman, the music critic, had to say about Flaubert reproaching Mérimée for "the cacophony of some of his concatenations of syllables, the dryness of his phrase endings, his il-



# REPRODUCTIONS OF EARLY AMERICAN GLASS

## From The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Metropolitan Museum's collection of early American glass is one of the finest examples of the extraordinary skill and infinite patience of this country's earliest craftsmen. Manufacturing equipment was indeed primitive, and much of the manufacturing process was by hand. Countless tumblers, glasses, decanters, plates were destroyed before the exact shape of design, consistency, and clearness of the glass objects were achieved. Only these found

their way into New England homes.

We are bringing you some of the copies made by the Museum from its original collection. These are not mass production replicas faintly resembling the originals. The extraordinary value in these copies lies in the fact that the Museum has used only the *original* materials and the *original* methods of manufacture. It would be more accurate to term this product revival than product reproduction.



### THE MAGNET AND GRAPE PATTERN

The Magnet and Grape pattern has the sturdy character and authoritative weight of the finest early Sandwich workmanship. This splendid mid-nineteenth-century American glass is ornamented with hand-cut and frosted grapes and vine leaves within glittering arches. The eight-sided knopped stems are solid crystal and rise from broad, starred feet. Height 6½".

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### BAROQUE DECANTER AND TUMBLERS

Stylized shell design above a band of vertical ribbing. Blown three-mold glass. About 1820-35. Height 11¾". Capacity more than one quart.

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### QUILTED DIAMOND KEG TUMBLERS

The 150-year-old original of this tumbler and the Museum's facsimile copy were handmade in almost the identical manner. The pattern of quilted diamonds was cut by hand on the interior of a cylindrical hinged iron mold. The glassblower affixed a glob of molten glass to his blowpipe and inserted it into the mold. Blowing with a controlled breath, he expanded the bubble of glass within the mold where it was formed into the desired shape and impressed with the pre-cut design of diamonds. The mold was then opened (traces of the hinge lines can be seen). The rim was shaped by hand. When the work was completed the glassblower's rod, which was used to hold the tumbler during its creation, was snapped off, leaving the pontil mark on the bottom of the piece. This rugged circle and the small individual variations between each piece are the hallmarks of handblown three-mold glass. The shape of these appealing small and sturdy tumblers was inspired by the kegs of rum and brandy they served to dispense. About 1820. Height 3⅛". Boxed set of four tumblers

F1120 \$16.50 set. Crystal







## NIQUE

Only one example of this enchanting flower pot and stand is known. It is illustrated on the cover of Ruth Webb's classic book on Sandwich glass and is now one of the great rarities in the Museum's collection of early American glass. The ambitious design and the early experimental period to which this flower pot is dated, together with the complete absence of any other known examples, suggest that only a very few copies were made before the molds were accidentally damaged beyond repair.

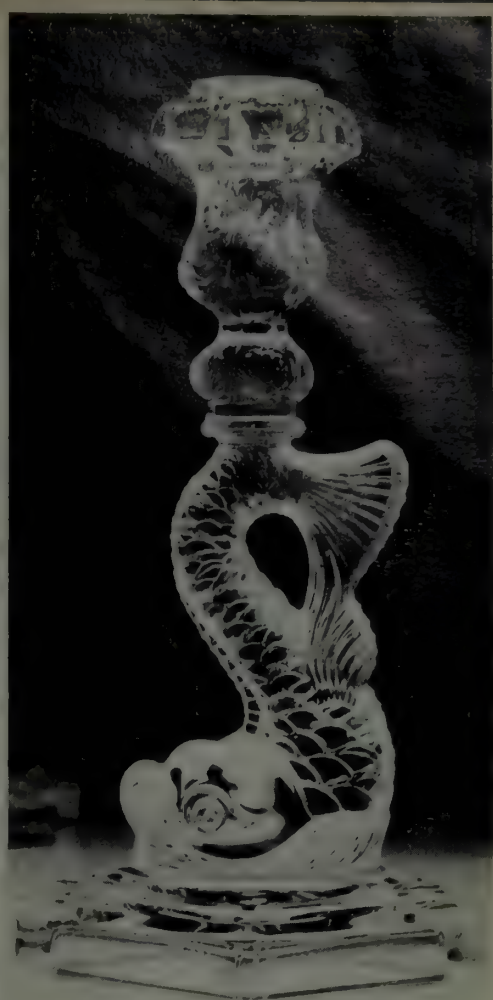
The flower pot is decorated with a pattern of fine horizontal ribbing and two baskets of flowers cut in high relief, one on each side. The rim is ornamented with a band of oak leaves and acorns. The Museum has purchased the flower pot and stand in a superb soft white, reminiscent of a color used at the Sandwich glassworks at the time the original molds were cut. Marked on the base with the Museum's monogram. Diameter 5".

F1070 \$16.50 Milk white

## A LEGEND

John Ernest Miller's "Three Face" design was exhibited at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in May 1876, where it was greatly admired and awarded a prize. The crisp glass sculpture with its fine frosted satin finish is both a *tour de force* in contemporary mold cutting and an example of Victorian neoclassicism. Legend has it that a woman's beauty had to be seen in three views—full face, profile, three-quarters—to be fully appreciated. Height 9½".

F1320 \$25 Crystal



## DOLPHIN CANDLESTICK

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## QUILTED AND DIAMOND SUNBURST PITCHER

Rectangular sunbursts and panels of diamond quilting ornament this large blown three-mold pitcher. The rim and pouring spout were shaped by hand while the glass was still hot and malleable, and as a final embellishment, a second molten piece of glass was deftly shaped into a carved handle. Height 6¼". Capacity nearly one quart.

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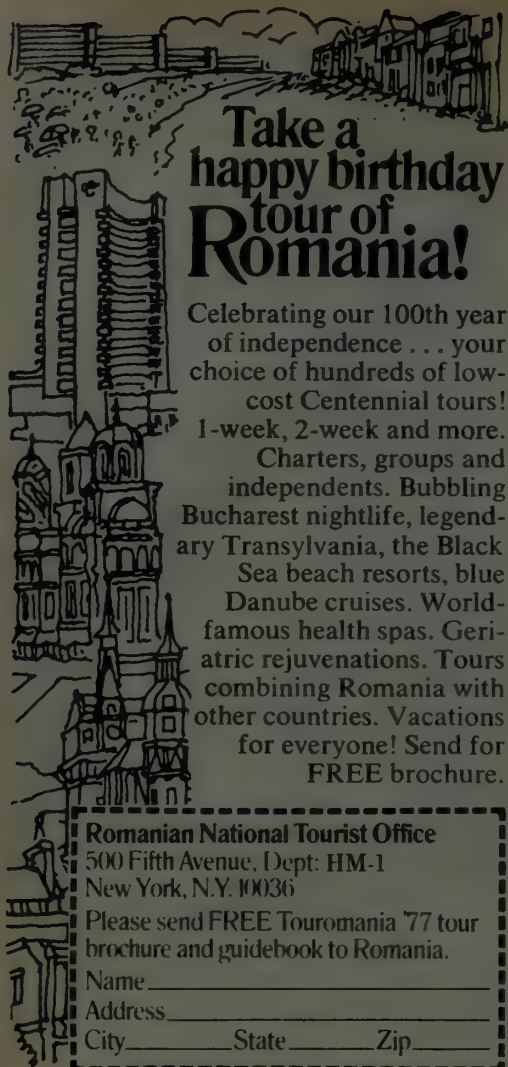
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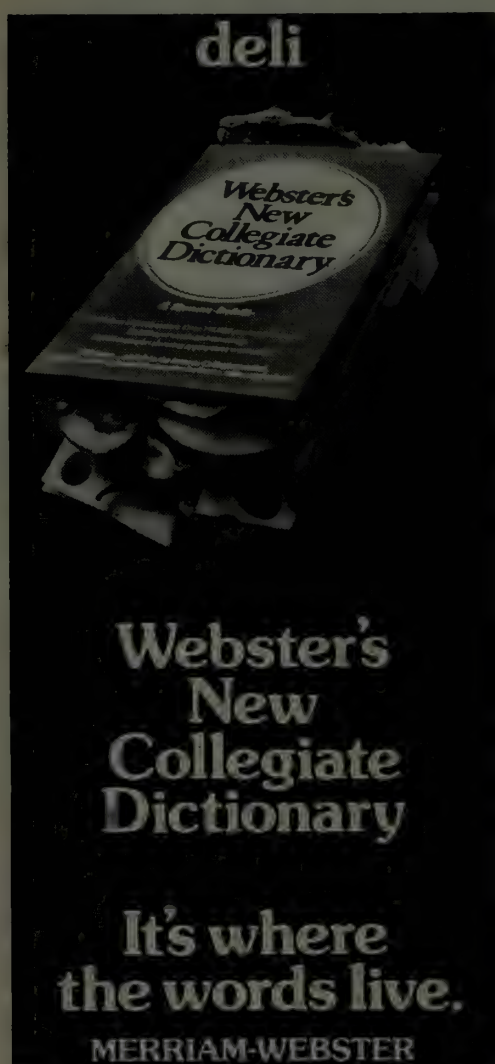
### BOOKS

logical punctuation." Newman said that Flaubert "was merely revolting against a texture and a rhythm that did not happen to be his own." Proust found Flaubert's rhythms calculated and monotonous. The explanation was the same. Strictly, you can only start to judge a writer's writing when you make yourself *hear* what it sounds like, and then you must learn to distinguish between what your ear likes to hear and what the other man's ear finds melodious. Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote in a letter to Robert Bridges that, picking up his sprung-rhythm poem "The Loss of the Eurydice" and reading, "as one commonly does, with the eye," he was struck aghast by a kind of raw and violent nakedness. "But take breath and read with the ear, and my verse becomes all right." The prose of novelists, being concerned with action and emotion rather than with ratiocination, tends to be verse-like and essay poetic effects. Dickens, as we know, often wrote unconsciously in blank verse. Later, more self-critical, novelists have written consciously in even the sonnet form and heroic couplets disguised as prose. This is a device sometimes used for seeing if the reader's ear is awake. It is all too often sound asleep. People who read with moving lips (like shopgirls and construction laborers) are really the best readers, but they do not read the best things.

Next, never automatically assume that a novel is autobiography. I am tired of being identified with my main character, as so often in the reviews of this new book, and I am often forced to rush into the correspondence columns and deny the identification, since silence might imply acceptance and conceivably have dangerous legal consequences, especially in England, where the laws of libel are very strict. Do please at least think it possible that the novelist may be capable of contriving his own characters and situations, however much they may appear to be God's. God, it is generally conceded, has made a remarkable job of the physical universe but has, strangely, not done quite so well with the spiritual element. God has not created anybody as lovable as Don Quixote or as seductive as Tolstoy's Natasha. Novelists would rather invent than transcribe, unless they are Chicago Nobel Prize men.

**R**EVIEWERS ARE not born by made, and they are made by editors. It seems proper now for me to address editors and give them some advice about the making of reviewers. Reviews are sometimes made, as I myself was out of novelists. I wrote two or three novels, and a kindly editor (who eventually turned against me for reviewing one of my own novels, but that is another story) wrote and said: "I read your two or three novels with great interest and wonder if you would consider reviewing other people's novels for my newspaper. The fee is small but you will get thousands of review copies to sell half-price." Now the editor like so many editors, was proven wrong in choosing a practicing novelist to review novels. Every novelist knows what agony goes into the writing of even an atrociously bad novel, and he tends to be oversympathetic to the most wretched tyro who ever turns out a maudlin exposition of his (more often her) adolescent sexual hangups. A working novelist's novel reviews are bland and kind and thoughtful, whereas a non-novelist's or failed novelist's novel reviews are acerbic, tabasco, brutally destructive, and have headlines like NEW BURGESS BORE. There is no doubt that the general reader prefers the hatchet job to compassion and sweet reason. The editor should always compromise, rejecting both hatchet and sweetness, and find, if he can, a reviewer who has written good books himself but has become lazy. Most of the best American reviewers are this sort of man, not woman, though, since women do not go in for laziness, especially now.

Never choose a reviewer out of the ranks of not merely the lazy but the impoverished. I knew a reviewer so impoverished that he had to send his review copies on the very day that he received them, which greatly hampered his capacity to review them fairly. He would, in a pub usually, copy out the main points of the blurb in his notebook then rush to Simmonds in the Strand, London (one of the few booksellers who gave half the retail price and always in *new notes*), where, whimpering with relief, he would proceed to a gin shop. Then he would, at leisure to work up his transcript of the blurb. His technique was simple.



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and was soon found out. I will show you what he did by referring to the blurb of a book of my own. First the blurb:

In *Devil of a State*, Anthony Burgess turns to an exotic scene—to Dunia, an imaginary caliphate in East Africa. With a benevolent Caliph devoted to Allah, an amenable British Representative, and oil concessions to the highest bidder, Dunia should have all the makings of a model African state. But Frank Lydgate, immigration officer, harassed by two wives and a mistress, knows this is far from the truth. The hodge-podge of European, Asian and African nationalities is whipped into a ferment by the agitations of a native People's Party, the amorous adventures of two Italian marble workers who are embellishing the Caliph's new mosque, and rumours of head-shrinking outside the town. The novel's hilarious climax coincides with the unexpected arrival of the rains and the ceremonial opening of the mosque.

Now the review:

Burgess has, in his new novel, attempted to fabricate from the meagre resources of his imagination an imaginary Muslim state situated somewhere round Tanzania, Zanzibar—East Africa anyway. Oil goes with Allah, as we may expect (is not perhaps Texas really crypto-Muslimman? There are the makings of a first-rate novel in this idea, though I doubt if Burgess would be able to write it), and British colonial protection presides over troubled political waters which the oil does nothing to tranquillise—rather the opposite. As usual, Burgess bites off more than he can chew. He shows himself incapable of managing his over-large cast of ethnic incompatibles, and what should be comic or disturbing is merely confusing.

And so on, up to 1,000 or so words. Finally, and very seriously, before an editor hands over fiction reviewing to a staff member or second cousin, he should make him submit to a written examination, properly supervised, with no dashing out to the toilet and the consultation of works of reference hidden in the cistern. This test might consist of the following questions:

1. Distinguish carefully between *naturalism* and *realism* and give a brief account of the origins of the two movements.

2. In which novels do the following characters appear? (a) Julien Sorel;

(b) Maggie Tulliver; (c) Mr. Rochester; (d) Gilbert Pinfold; (e) Holden Caulfield; (f) Charlus; (g) Charlie Citrine.

3. Write brief sentences illustrating the correct use of the following terms: (a) existential (b) chosiste; (c) eponymous; (d) stream of consciousness; (e) structuralist.

4. Name the authors of the following. What do all these works have in common (apart from being works of fiction)? (a) *Breakfast at Tiffany's*; (b) *The Breast*; (c) *The Beast in the Jungle*; (d) *Death in Venice*.

5. Who said the following? (a) "A novel is a hell of a heavy machine to construct"; (b) "Oh dear me yes, the novel has a plot"; (c) "For literature is in fact art and would be a significant form if it could"; (d) "All art is perfectly useless"; (e) "*Pulchra sunt quae visa placent*."

6. In what novels do the following imaginary territories appear? (a) Utopia; (b) Airstrip One; (c) Nepenthe; (d) Dunia; (e) Barchester; (f) Thunder-ten-tronckh. Who wrote them?

7. Of what works of fiction are the following the final statements? (a) "I'll think about it tomorrow. Tomorrow is another day." (b) "Yes" (c) "*Il faut cultiver notre jardin*." (d) "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." (e) "I never saw any of them again—except the cops. No way has yet been invented to say good-bye to them."

8. What is a quark and where does it come from?

9. Name one work of fiction by each of the following. (a) Anne Brontë; (b) William Blake; (c) Dr. Samuel Johnson; (d) Algernon Charles Swinburne; (e) Elizabeth Barrett Browning; (f) Spiro Agnew.

10. What is (a) a *Bildungsroman*? (b) a *roman fleuve*? (c) an *anti-roman*?

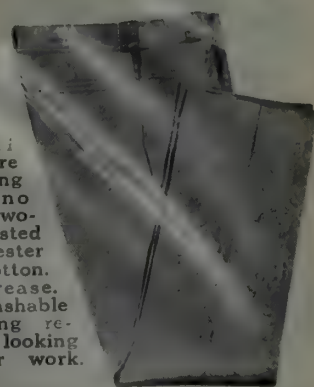
And so on. A prospective reviewer failing to score at least 60 percent should spend a year in solid reading and study before taking up a reviewing job. An existing reviewer failing to score at least 80 percent may carry on reviewing for all I care, but, if he has a modicum of sense and a pinch of humility, he will automatically avoid statements like NEW BURGESS A BORE. □

Anthony Burgess, the British novelist, is at work on a long historical novel called *Christ the Tiger*.

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# OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS

by Evan Connell

*A Fringe of Leaves*, by Patrick White. Viking, \$10.

**T**HE YEAR IS 1836. Attractive young Ellen Roxburgh and her sickly husband have been visiting Mr. Roxburgh's brother, Garnet, a farmer in Tasmania. Now they are returning to England aboard the *Bristol Maid*. By flashbacks we learn about the visit.

One day while horseback riding in the woods Mrs. Roxburgh was thrown. She landed on a bed of soft leaf mold and was not seriously hurt; but Garnet, who had been following her, behaved like a scoundrel. Then, back at the farm, she discovered that while she was being ravished her husband had suffered a heart attack.

No longer comfortable at Garnet's home, the Roxburghs move to Hobart, where they take rooms from "a widow in reduced circumstances" and wait for a ship to England.

Wandering through Hobart one afternoon, Mrs. Roxburgh meets a man whose eyes "burned with cold hate as they inquired into every aspect of her figure." He pursues her. "Blackened nails were tearing at a brooch on her bosom. She was looking deep into the pocks and pores of a fiery skin as the blast of rum smote her in the face."

Fortunately a carriage appears. And then "somebody, a gentleman, sprang down from the driver's seat, and charged towards them, whip-in-hand." By coincidence it is Garnet, who rebukes her: "You court disaster, Ellen. Remember this is Van Diemen's Land. An infernal situation won't be improved by your blowing on the coals."

That evening the Roxburghs' ship arrives. As soon as possible they go aboard, anxious to leave such a violent country.

Seven days out, during a fog, the *Bristol Maid* strikes a reef. Passengers and crew climb into a longboat and pinnacle.

After a week in the longboat Mrs. Roxburgh, who is now pregnant, miscarries. Her stillborn child is put into a glory bag, and Captain Purdew "began performing an office to which life at sea had accustomed him."

Presently the steward dies and is thrown overboard, but Captain Purdew does not read another burial service, "perhaps because he did not realize anything had happened, or else he had mislaid Oswald Dignam's book."

They reach shore. Captain Purdew drops to his knees in the sand. "At this point overcome by emotion, the old man fell on his face and united his bubbles with those of the receding tide."

Next morning, believing they are on the mainland, they decide to walk to a settlement at Moreton Bay; but a spear thuds into the sand and "fifteen to sixteen natives were seen to have congregated, their gibberish accompanied by overtly hostile gestures."

Captain Purdew, although wounded by the next spear, "was made frantic by the prospect of his subordinates committing violence." Nevertheless, somebody fires a musket: "The savages emitted horrid shrieks as one of their number fell." And the next instant a spear is "twangling" in the captain's ribs.

Ellen, who had been brought up on a farm, watches the captain's blood stain the sand: "There had not been so much blood since Pa and Will slaughtered the calf during their lodger's interminable stay." Then she hears "a terrible whooshing, like the beating of giant wings.... A spear, she saw, had struck her husband; it was hanging from his neck, long and black, giving him a lopsided look."

Moments later, after "keeling over," Mr. Roxburgh dies.

The savages retreat, so the men dig a trench "in which to bury their late captain, scratching with their hands alone in a frenzy of application to create the illusion that they were occupied positively, while hoping that the officer who had joined them at their work might come up with some plan to reduce their plight."

Alas, the savages return and everybody is captured. The sailors are stripped and led away. Mrs. Roxburgh, surrounded by black women, is examined. Her hair is pulled. Sand is thrown in her face. Then she, too, is stripped.

"Thus isolated and naked, Mrs. Roxburgh considered what to do next."

Unintentionally she steps on her late husband's hand, which startles her: "She was propelled, logically it seemed, in the opposite direction, up the slope, and found herself amongst those burning mattresses of dry sand laced with runners of convolvulus such as she had noticed farther back along the beach." She pulls up some vines and ties them around her waist, making herself a fringe of leaves.

Then she is marched to the aborigi-



camp and given a child to nurse. Life at the camp seems idyllic: children play ball, men chat while repairing weapons, women fix supper. Mrs. Roxburgh could not remain unmoved by the natural beauty surrounding her. Evening light coaxed nobler dreams out of black bodies...."

Next morning the women chop off her hair with a shell, which is painful. She cries out, "Why must you torture me so? Isn't it enough to have killed my husband, my friends?" But they pay no attention. Her body is smeared with animal fat and charcoal, her scalp plastered with beeswax and feathers. Soon, though, she begins to appreciate the primitive life: "She positively panted after the tribe to which she now belonged."

Then she comes upon the roasted, half-eaten body of the first officer, which is a shock. "She was left gasping and sobbing, not so much for the stolid Ned Courtney, her relationship with whom had never been more than rudimentary, as for the death of her husband and her own indubitable predicament." Should she run away? At this point two children appear and start beating her with sticks. After having beaten her the children offer to shake hands—"a gesture she accepted gratefully."

On the way back to camp she trips over a vine and rolls downhill. The children tumble happily after her and they land all in a heap, laughing. "She was so extraordinarily content she wished it could have lasted for ever." Next she becomes a cannibal. A girl who has been killed in a fight is cooked and devoured. Mrs. Roxburgh, who was not invited to the feast, picks up a discarded thighbone: "Her stiffened body and almost audibly twanging nerves were warning her against what she was about to do...."

So life in Eden continues. The aborigines paddle to the mainland for an important ceremony. Tribes from all over have been gathering. Mrs. Roxburgh studies a gigantic warrior who carries a hatchet; she suspects he may be an escaped convict with a blackened face. When she asks if he is a Christian the giant trembles. He is, in fact, an Englishman named Jack Chance.

"Gratitude and relief threatened to spill out of her eyes and mouth, but she managed instead, 'My name is

Ellen.'" She asks him to guide her to Moreton Bay; if so, she promises, he will be pardoned.

That night he abducts her: "He was as steel to her more passive lead, but when she was not a painful lump condemned to bumping behind, and at intervals, against him, she thought to hear an insubstantial tinkling as she flitted over the uneven ground." Luckily, Jack has not kidnapped her for some sinister purpose; he is taking her to Moreton Bay. "He was, as she had always suspected, a decent man at heart."

Each night he builds a hut for them to sleep in, and she permits him to untie her girdle of vines.

After a particularly passionate embrace he inquires: "Could you love me, Ellen?"

It is a difficult question. Next morning as she follows him through the forest she contemplates the scars on his back, which indicate that he has been flogged, and wonders: "Could she love him? She believed she could."

At that moment Jack stops walking and she runs into him. "What," she panted, "is it, Jack?" He doesn't answer. "Perhaps he hated as well as despised one who was little more to him than a doxy met by accident."

The long march exhausts them both. Ellen comforts him when he is tired: "My love? My darling?" She gathered in her arms this detached object, or rare fruit, his head."

One afternoon she feels an urge to climb a tree. Jack follows. She orders him to stop because the limb might break, but he will not obey. "Mrs. Roxburgh frowned and sighed, and in her distraction looked out through the foliage. 'Why,' she cried, 'that surely is a barn! Or a house, is it? Not that many miles off. Isn't it a ploughed field? Oh, God be praised! It's over!'"

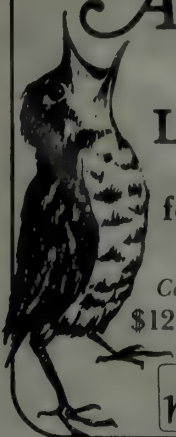
Unfortunately this is not true. Jack begins to talk about his crime. He had a girl named Mab, but when he found her in bed with a sword swallower he cut her throat.

Nor is that all. It goes on for another eighty pages, but the end is less remarkable than the fact that four years ago the author of this book was given a Nobel Prize for literature. □

*Evan Connell is the author of Mr. Bridge, Mrs. Bridge. The Connoisseur, and most recently, Double Honeymoon.*

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# MEMORIES OF AN INDIAN CHILDHOOD

by Edward Abbey

**The Names: A Memoir**, by N. Scott Momaday. Harper & Row, \$10.

**I**N THIS ELEGIAC autobiography of his youth, Mr. Momaday gives us another version of a man's search for the roots of his life. Alex Haley's search took him to Africa; Scott Momaday's takes him back to the hills of Kentucky and north to the high plains of Wyoming, and from there, in memory and imagination, back to the Bering Straits. Mr. Momaday is a Kiowa Indian, a "native American" in current sociopolitical jargon. (But almost all of us are native Americans—what else could we be?) However, he is not entirely Kiowa; by blood and ancestry he is half a white man. His mother's name was Mayme Natachee Scott, and she and her family were descendants of early American pioneers—one of them a general in the Revolutionary War and the fourth governor of Kentucky.

Mayme Scott, a blue-eyed, dark-haired beauty, rebelled to some extent against her own heritage. She preferred, for various reasons, to think of herself as an Indian. There was some justification for this; her middle name, Natachee, was taken from that of the Cherokee wife of her great-grandfather I. J. Galyen. But more important, in Momaday's words, his mother chose to "imagine who she was." She called herself Little Moon, dressed in Indian costume, including headband and eagle feather, and in 1929 enrolled in Haskell Institute, the Indian school at Lawrence, Kansas. Her roommate was a Kiowa girl, who introduced her to other members of that tribe. In 1933 Mayme Scott married Alfred Morris Momaday, whose Kiowa name is Huan-toa, meaning "war lance." A year later the author of this book was born.

The baby was raised by his parents among the Kiowas, on the family farm in Oklahoma. Momaday's father, however, was no farmer; he was an artist, a painter, and, like his wife, a teacher. After several years of wandering during the depression and war years, the Momadays found steady work as schoolteachers at the Jemez Pueblo in

northern New Mexico, and there they lived for the next twenty-six years. The most memorable scenes in Scott Momaday's book come from this boyhood spent among the Jemez Indians in the high canyon and mountain country of New Mexico.

Scott Momaday's heritage remained a mix. Though living among Indians for much of his childhood and boyhood, his first language, his "native" language, thanks to his mother, was English. At seventeen he was sent to a military school in Virginia and later took degrees at the University of New Mexico and at Stanford, where he is now a professor of English.

**S**O MUCH FOR THE factual structure of *The Names*. Though a small book, in pages and number of words, there is far more to it than my bare outline suggests. Like his mother, Scott Momaday has chosen to imagine himself *all* Indian, and to "imagine himself" back into the life, the emotions, the spirit of his Kiowa forebears. He does not dismiss his white ancestry; the book contains some fine anecdotes about the Anglo-American side of the family—for example, his grandfather Theodore Ellis, who was for a time a Kentucky sheriff: "He shot at people, and people shot at him." There is a photograph of his great-great-grandfather I. J. Galyen, posing with a brace of pistols crossed on his chest, looking fierce, and of his great-grandfather George Scott, stern, moustached and scowling, holding a child in his arms, two other children and his wife—a young woman with the saddest eyes—at his side.

But most of the book is involved with American Indians—the Navajo, the Pueblo, and especially, of course, the Kiowas. *Involved* is the word; Scott Momaday takes us, through sympathy, empathy, and imaginative feeling, deep into the interior of places and a people. His prose is formal, symbolic, and precise, like so much of the pictorial art of American Indians; at the same time and by the same means his words achieve his purpose—an in-

ner view, not merely an insider's view—of what it might have meant, or *must* have meant, to be a part of that high plains "horse culture" which flourished so briefly but gloriously in the American West. Among the many scenes of this life is one told from the point of view of Momaday's great-uncle Pohd-lohk ("Old Wolf" in Kiowa):

*That summer the Nez Percés came. It was then five years since they had been released from imprisonment at Fort Leavenworth and two before they should be allowed to return to their northern homeland. They seemed a regal people, as tall as the Kiowas, as slow to reveal themselves. There was an excitement about them, something of legendary calm and courage. It was common knowledge that, under their great chief Joseph, they had fought brilliantly against the United States and had come very close to victory. It was the first time that Pohd-lohk had seen them, but he had known of them all of his life. The Kiowas remembered that, long ago, they had come upon these imposing people . . . in the high lands on the edge of the Northern Plains. This was a part of the larger story in which Pohd-lohk believed. It was a good thing to have the Nez Percés; they were worthy guests, worthy of him, he thought, of his youthful vigor and good looks. For their benefit he strutted about and set his mouth just so, in the attitude of a warrior.*

It is this man Pohd-lohk ("The say he made fine arrows") who bestows on the child Scott Momaday his first Kiowa name, Tsoai-talee, meaning "Rock-tree Boy." Tsoai, the Rock tree, is the 1,200-foot volcanic butte in Wyoming which the whites call Devil's Tower. For the Kiowas it was a place of high significance. "It loomed above the earth, the far crest roving upon eternity. . . . In the night it stood away and away and grew up among the stars." To be named after the mysterious and mystic rock was, for the boy, a high honor and a compelling one. For among the Indians a name was never merely an identifying tag but something much more important: a kind of emblem and ideal, the determining source of a man or woman's character and course of life. "Pohd-lohk spoke, as if telling a story, of the coming-out people, of their long journey. He spoke of how it was that everything began, of Tsoai, and of the stars falling or holding fast in strange



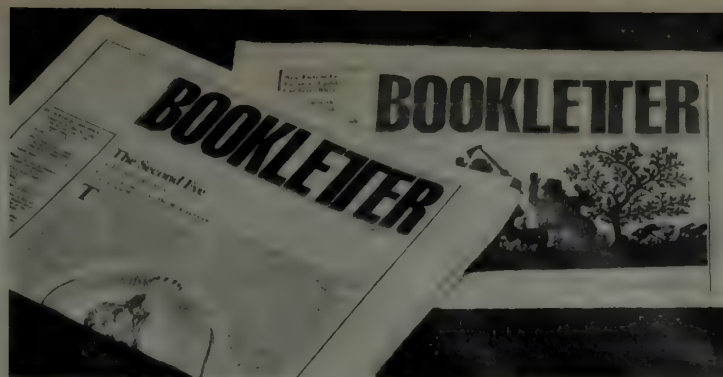
terns in the sky. And in this, at  
t, Pohd-lohk affirmed the whole life  
the child in a name, saying: Now  
u are, Tsoai-talee." Now you are.

**A**ND SO, using his mother's  
language, our language,  
Scott Momaday tells his  
story in the manner of his  
her's people, moving freely back and  
th in time and space, interweaving  
end, myth, and history, exploring  
minds of many remarkable per-  
ages, including some of the strong,  
ttle old women who were among  
father's lineage. There is little nos-  
gia in this book, certainly no sen-  
mentality, but the tone of the whole,  
ended or not, becomes, at least for  
s reader, as I have said, inescapably  
giac.

For the great horse and hunting cul-  
e of the Kiowas (and all other plains-  
n) is gone. It may have been the  
est, most adventurous, most beauti-  
way of life ever known on this or  
y other of the earth's five continents.  
t it could not withstand the violent  
vance of European-American in-  
ustrialism, the rapacity of overwhelm-  
numbers. The overt violence is  
part of the past; the seductive  
lence of our greed-and-consumption  
ture continues its cancerlike expan-  
n. The American Southwest, where  
ave found my home, remains the  
al holdout against that malaise. But  
is yielding fast; and most of the  
est inhabitants of this region, the  
lian tribes, have already succumbed  
the manifold pressures and allure-  
nts of the ever-growing economy.  
ive up your land, give up your free-  
n and dignity," say the many voices  
this new power, "and in return we  
l give you safety, security, welfare,  
fab housing, pickup trucks, color  
vision, Holsum ice cream, Rainbo  
ead, and on-the-job training."

Those voices lie, for even their  
apest promises turn out eventually  
be false. Scott Momaday's book sug-  
ts the possibility, even the hope,  
t through some new alliance of the  
t in the Indians' culture and the  
t of the white man's civilization,  
might yet find a way to answer that  
and repeal its apparent conquest. □

ward Abbey is the author of *The Monkey*  
ench Gang and of a forthcoming collec-  
a of essays, *The Journey Home*.



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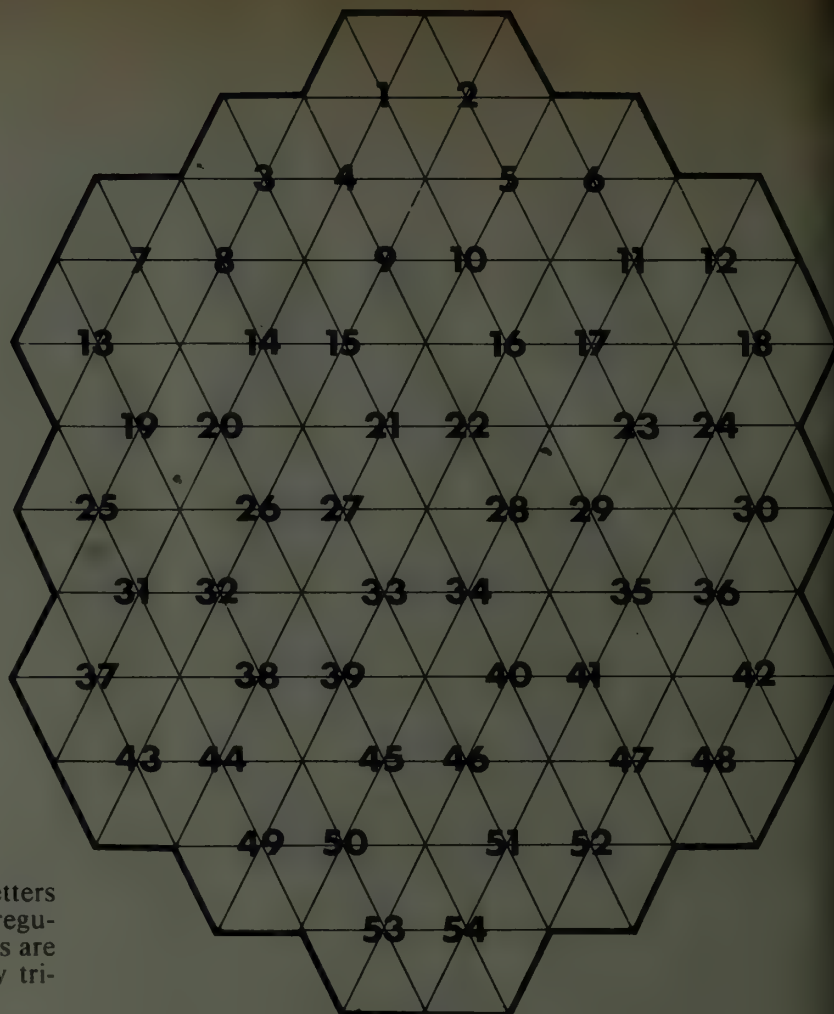
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# PUZZLE

## HEX SIGNS

by Richard Maltby, Jr. (with acknowledgments to Lascia of *The Listener*)



**This month's instructions:** All clue answers are six letters long. Each clue number in the diagram is at the center of a regular hexagon formed by the six adjoining triangles. Answers are to be entered in the appropriate hexagon, starting at any triangle and traveling around in either direction.

As a check, the letters appearing in the thirty-six triangles whose sides form the border of the diagram may be rearranged to spell SPRING SPLURGE: WORDS OVERLAP, REPEL TRENDS.

Answers include two proper names; there are no uncommon words. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 14.

### CLUES

1. Civil Service plot, i.e.
2. Sheet with the alternative tar
3. Turn up with those left ultimately virginal
4. BAND-LEADER GIVEN BUM STEER—in caps
5. Dances, as going two ways holding a degree in music
6. Mixtures, like somersaulting boys
7. Blades are rogues, if you take one for one
8. Very important person depersonalized for fear that it's the lowest
9. Faults by half cripples
10. Remember, relative to missing an arm or a leg
11. Take back ring a second time?
12. CONGRESSMAN TO PUBLICIZE FIX
13. Trounces the stinkers
14. Cat, to Le Corbusier, back on the front
15. Coeval hideaway?
16. Somewhere in there, a derivation for schoolbook
17. Garden salad, in jeopardy
18. It's tan, but unfortunately discolors
19. Disclose man's hiding in Britain and Northern Ireland
20. Poet (heavyweight) led by a very short length
21. Stable? Verily, unstable
22. Do wrong in wanting wine
23. Performer who burns a little?
24. Start singing before getting in to hi-fi equipment
25. Smells that can give you a start
26. Clean up Italian river bugs
27. Spanish paintings brought back from the war?
28. Like pickles
29. Poles beget first seducers
30. Stock race
31. Small in length, title is changed
32. It takes gall to return to escape with diamonds
33. Old West groups have not finished
34. Easter bouquet is found around Long Island
35. Hesitant nuns—pure, if you don't get them started
36. Color that keeps virgin in place? Just the opposite!
37. Defer female love (ignore the ring)
38. Public outcry about moral degeneration
39. Army time: back-track
40. They go inside ships
41. Avenge with a change of character—that's the way to get someplace
42. Divorced in name? Just the reverse! It's on a break!
43. Move forcibly left and it'll get you into a hole
44. Half-clue: stove in, split
45. Westerners comprehend this novelist
46. Transmitter needs to be fixed right
47. Fly consumed by way of being assimilated
48. Have no love for Kennedy during set-back? Just the opposite!
49. Victor's starting with spiritual
50. Navy seen in red showy outfits
51. Got the better of virtuous lady in bed
52. Queues—we hear you may serve on them
53. Make thin fricasseed fryer with a stuffing
54. One who supplicates through aplomb, e.g., Garbo

### CONTEST RULES

Send completed diagram with name and address to Hex Signs, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by February 10. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened will receive a one-year sub-

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# Harper's

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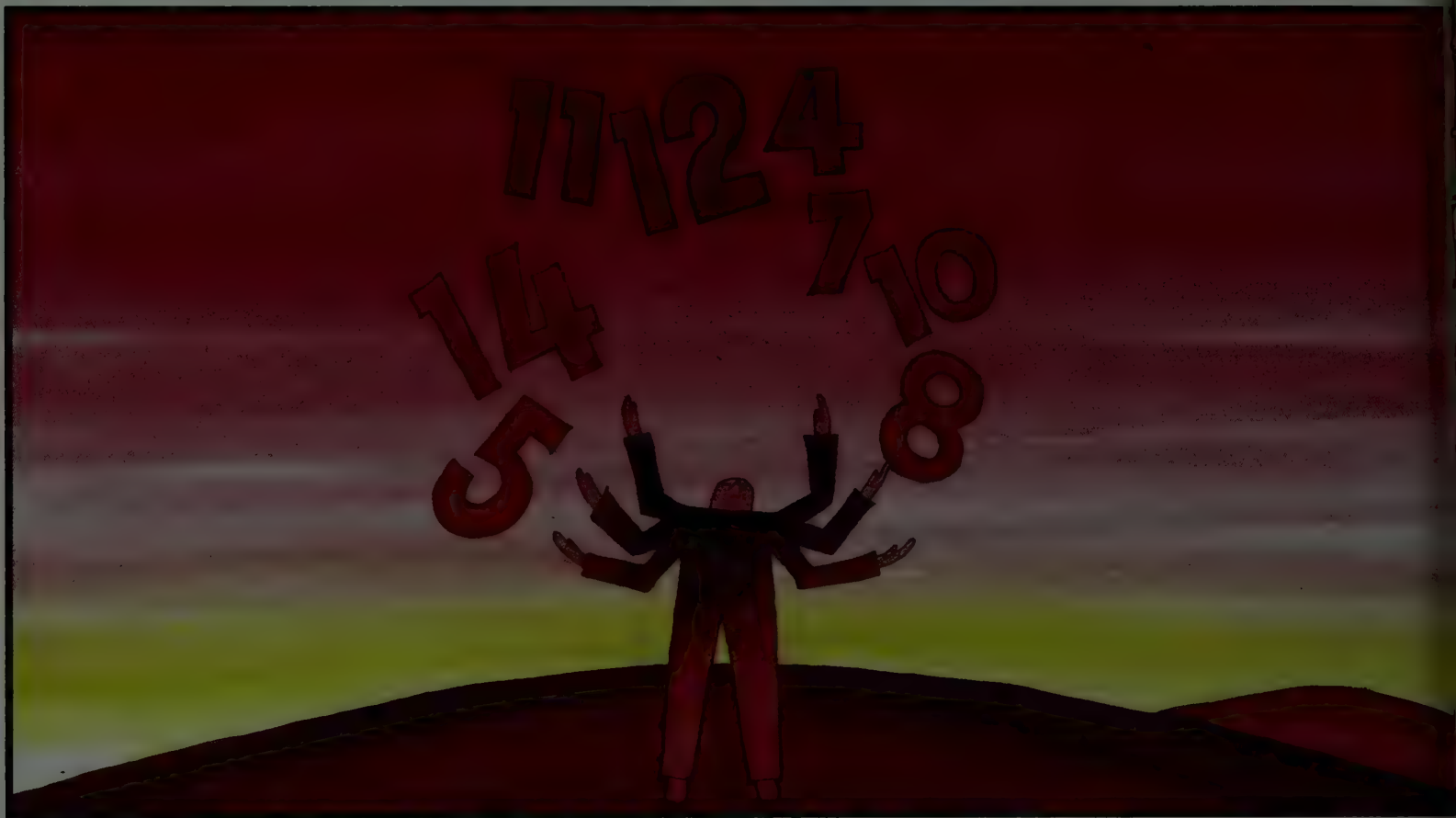
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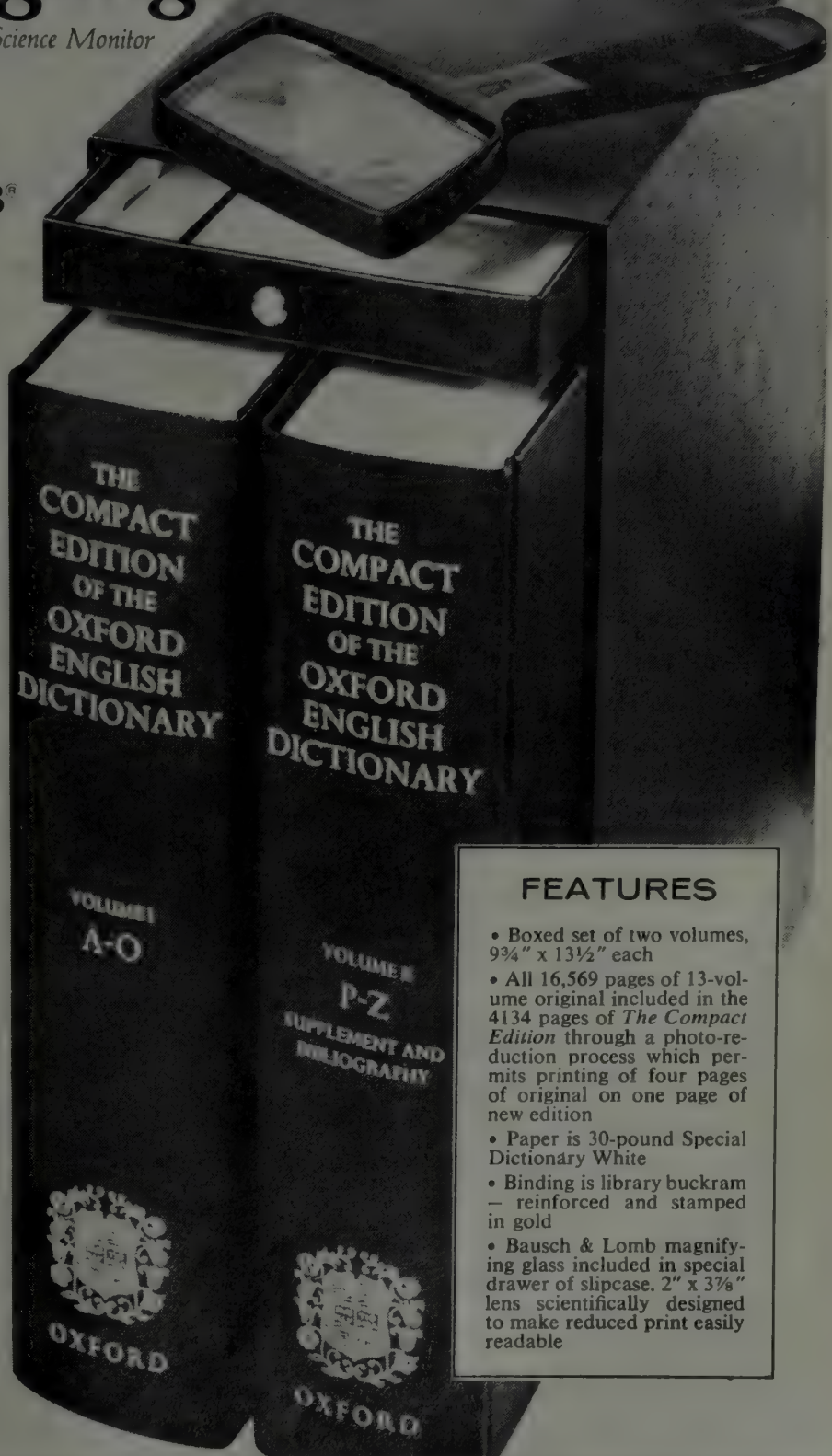
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Published monthly by Harper's Magazine Company, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, a division of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. John Cowles, Jr., Chairman; Otto A. Silha, President; Donald R. Dwight, Publisher; Charles W. Arnason, Secretary; William R. Beattie, Treasurer. Subscriptions: \$8.97 one year. Foreign except Canada and Pan America: \$1.50 per year additional. For advertising information contact Harper-Atlantic Sales, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Other offices in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Copyright © 1977 by the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. All rights reserved. The trademark *Harper's* is used by Harper's Magazine Company under license, and is a registered trademark owned by Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated. Printed in the U.S.A. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send Form 3579 to Harper's Magazine, 1255 Portland Place, Boulder, Colo. 80302



# LETTERS

## The media-government dance

Tom Bethell's confused picture of the news media as bed partner of government ["The Myth of an Adversary Press," January] is short on evidence and long on innuendo. His arguments are flip, shallow, contradictory, and, sadly, off target in attempting to focus on the real sins of the press.

Bethell implies that reporters and editors are a collusive group, arrogant, self-aggrandizing, who conspire among themselves and with government officials in some sort of division of power. This is simplistic nonsense that few inside government or newsrooms will recognize. The uneasy coexistence of press and government is a product of the reporter's desire for information, and the public official's ability to provide or withhold it. The surface cooperation is not inspired by mutual trust, reciprocal admiration, or common objectives.

Edward J. Epstein's point (in the *Commentary* article quoted by Bethell) is that reporters can't be successful as independent, adversarial investigators because they have neither the training for the task nor the requisite access to information. If anything, the press becomes puppet to a government that dispenses information at its choosing—not an equal partner in power.

Bethell explains part of the media's success as a new branch of government by asserting that they influence public opinion and shape attitudes. If the media have the "means of forming public opinion sympathetic to their cause," they have been dismally inept in using it. Years of research findings testify to the media's low impact on opinion formation or change, and recent polls document the low esteem and trust that the public awards the press.

It is difficult to divine Bethell's purpose, but if it was to argue simply that

journalists do not deserve special protection on the confidentiality of sources, he will find many respected journalists who have argued the same position.

Had Bethell looked at journalism beyond a few special cases—the Pentagon Papers, the Pike report, and Watergate—he might have arrived at a more complex but at the same time more valid analysis of press role, press operations, and press inadequacy. He might also have discovered, as have those who have followed his work for more than a decade, that Ben Bagdikian is hardly a "press cheerleader," but rather one of the more informed and biting press critics the profession has produced.

ARNOLD H. ISMACH  
Chairman  
News-Editorial Sequence  
School of Journalism and Mass  
Communication  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minn.

In pointing out "neglected facts" about the operations of the media in Washington, Tom Bethell neglected to mention one.

During the Newspaper Guild meeting where he said reporters talked about such "well-worn" themes as the dangers of government secrecy, one participant rose and gave an impassioned speech on the way the whole Daniel Schorr case ought to have been settled.

The decent way, he said, would be for the person who leaked the Pike report to simply stand up and hold a press conference. Tell the world.

Since the author of such simple logic was sitting right in front of me, I asked him who he was. He said he was Tom Bethell.

It would be nice if we had a bureaucratic army where the lieutenants would just step out of ranks and tell us when the generals were marching them over cliffs, just simply shout it out without

fear of ruined careers or criminal prosecution.

It would make Bethell's chosen task of trying to marry the media to the government a lot easier. We'd spend all our time at press conferences. What country does Bethell have in mind?

JOHN J. FIALKA  
The Washington Star  
Washington, D.C.

Tom Bethell's new twist on the press/government waltz can be verified by many concrete examples, and I agree with his overall analysis. However, I question whether "exposing government to view also inevitably tends to weaken it." Witness the ongoing Medicare scandal, and press/government's joint solution to it: more government programs in the health delivery area. The attitude seems to be: if a government program doesn't work or invites scandal or hurts those it purports to help, then double the budget and make it more "comprehensive."

The media act as a perfect forum for the growth and maintenance of built-in bureaucratic lobbies, including the various federal departments and their constituencies. Rather than weakening government, these exposés tend to strengthen the grip of these federal departments on larger and larger shares of our national income.

JAMES M. ZELENSKI  
Laramie, Wyo.

I'm going to cavil a bit with *Harper's* on its January cover story. Mr. Bethell wrote an article about a recent development in the media, whereby they have worked their way into a powerful and seemingly unassailable position of eminence in American society. He did *not*, in spite of himself, write an article about a government-media merger, although he claimed to in his title and opening and closing paragraphs.

Contests between the media and gov-



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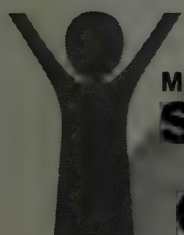
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ernment, Mr. Bethell says, usually result in the latter's appearing powerless, villainous, idiotic, or otherwise at fault, and the media feed on these victories. This is hardly a "symbiotic" relationship. It is more like a predatory one, or at least parasitic. Furthermore, it is confusing to have Mr. Bethell illustrate how journalists can act as bureaucrats in editorial pseudo-Cabinets, and then illogically associate that fact with the point he is ostensibly making, that the media are a de facto member of the government's bureaucracy.

Why did Mr. Bethell and *Harper's* muddy up a good article for the sake of a catchy title and an arresting cover?

OTTO PERKINS  
New York, N.Y.

I read with interest Mr. Bethell's analysis of the symbiotic relationship between the government and the media and the resultant "government by media." However, the concentration of governmental power in the hands of the media is even more comprehensive than depicted by Mr. Bethell. He should expand on his theme and point out that not only does the fourth estate make "policy decisions" which constitutionally belong with the Executive, but also, the media make decisions which constitutionally inhere in the Judiciary.

In theory, trial judges and appellate tribunals are the sole arbiters of what evidence is legally admissible to determine the guilt or innocence of an accused. In practice, however, these decisions are made daily by newspaper editors who reverently invoke the "people's right to know" and print admissions, confessions, and evidence which law-enforcement officials claim to have obtained. To date, the courts have attempted to remedy the conflict that inevitably arises between the First Amendment right to free speech and the Sixth Amendment right to a fair trial through changes in venue and extensive *voir dire* of prospective jurors. In light of the sophistication and pervasiveness of modern news coverage, these judicial devices are no longer adequate. Quite often, by the time the accused is scheduled to exercise his Sixth Amendment right to a fair trial, the media have so zealously protected our "right to know" that the entire pool of prospective jurors has been exposed to irrelevant, immaterial, and illegally obtained evidence.

As much as I disagree with most pretrial news releases, I suspect that a limited usurpation of the judicial role by the media is a necessary evil of our constitutional framework. Although I am of the persuasion that the people's collective "right to know" is outweighed by the individual citizen's right to a fair trial, I am loath to place any restrictions on the media. Rather, I suppose, the remedy must lie in judicial sanctions imposed upon the attorneys who try to set the stage for a trial by acting as sources for the receptive news reporters.

W. WILLIAM LEAPHART  
Attorney-at-Law  
Helena, Mont.

"The Myth of an Adversary Press" was one of the best articles concerning the media that I have ever read. I think *Harper's* deserves credit for having printed it. I think it gives moral support to the educated, thinking American who doesn't feel completely comfortable with the massive bombardment and uniformity of "news" to which he is subjected.

Tom Bethell has performed a great service; I hope his views give courage to other talented writers who dare to stand up and be counted.

GARDNER MACARTNEY  
Lawrence, Mass.

#### TOM BTHELL REPLIES:

I can agree with Mr. Ismach only when he suggests that the press role is complex. Elsewhere he primarily reasserts the conventional picture of journalists as begging for crumbs from the high table of government. I can only suggest that when an old group acquires new power, as with the media today, its functionaries will always tend to argue that there has been no change—lest there be new scrutiny, new hostility, withdrawal of favors. That appears to be Mr. Ismach's role here. He is right in saying that the media are generally held in low esteem, but government is held even lower. I am suspicious of his claim that the media have "low impact on opinion formation." If pollsters ask questions like "What is your opinion of Richard Nixon?" there is no way that the media's impact can be discounted in the response. In fact, there's no other way such opinions can be arrived at.

Mr. Fialka is correct. At the press

conference on behalf of Daniel Schorr, I did speak out against the self-serving nature of the remarks being made by a variety of well-known journalists. If only one of them had admitted that the present system of government-to-media secrecy was tailor-made to the professional and status desires of journalists, I wouldn't have minded. But none did. The latter part of Mr. Fialka's letter illuminates this point. A journalist who "spends his time at press conferences" is clearly less important than one who "reveals government secrets," i.e., has a source who passes them on to him uniquely.

Mr. Zelenski makes a good point, and I'm not sure there's any answer to it. In fact, the more I read his letter the more I suspect he is right. His analysis depends on the premise that if a program doesn't work, then it's ipso facto underfunded, rather than misconceived, and I suspect that this premise holds true in the minds of most government workers. And the media, as Zelenski says, often do a good job of exposing the failure of government programs.

Mr. Perkins has a point, too. It's true that parts of my article tried to show that the media look good to the extent that they make government look bad, which is of course adversary, and Mr. Perkins is right to suggest that there is a more adversary relationship between media and government than the title of the article suggested. The problem is that media and government, and the relationship between them, is a complex and amorphous subject—one that does not lend itself to reduction to one simple law or set of laws. The cover and title represented an attempt to dramatize my essential point—that the connections between media and government are more important and numerous than such "confrontations" as Watergate suggest.

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#### Tellers of tales

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Blaming women for the ills of the world is an old male trick. I can accept much of what John Goldthwaite ["Notes on the Children's Book Trade," January] has to say as exactly that, and take my place beside Eve, Pandora, the best of them. But I cannot stand by and watch him credit the "gifted [male] amateur" with talent



that is rightfully female. It is instructive to note that while the Grimms were doing their work, the ladies were telling the tales. The Brothers Grimm, as any folklorist knows, did not write their tales. They collected them. The majority, in fact, they collected from women in Hesse, Germany. It is a relief to know that Mr. Goldthwaite's conclusions are based on prejudice, and not on truth or a gift he may think he has for detecting what is or is not male talent.

CLAUDIA JOHNSON  
The Folklore Institute  
Bloomington, Ind.

Thank you for publishing John Goldthwaite's witty, welcome, and scathing "Notes on the Children's Book Trade." This high-priced trash, this ineane and simpering rubbish written for the young pours out of even good publishing houses, and into libraries, in increasing floods every year. It is a betrayal of children. The low quality of what is offered them may explain, in part, their marked lack of interest in reading.

Goldthwaite's strictures on the state of professional reviewing of children's books in this country are entirely justified. Almost no newspapers and magazines even pretend to integrity in this matter. Jacket blurbs, publishers' publicity, and the uncritical estimates from trade journals are routinely regurgitated under the heading of reviews.

I have one reservation only in my enthusiastic assent to Mr. Goldthwaite's indictment. I would mildly remind him that there have been, and are today, a few women writing first-rate books for children: Juliana Ewing, Mary Molesworth, Frances Hodgson Burnett, E. Nesbit, P. L. Travers, Patricia Lynch, and Mary Norton.

MARY BINGHAM  
Glenview, Ky.

#### JOHN GOLDTHWAITE REPLIES:

When I wrote that our greatest children's stories were the work of amateurs, and most of those men, I should probably have left the Grimms off the list. They were not the authors of original work; Miss Johnson is right to bring that up. We should remember, however, that the ladies of Hesse, to whom she ascribes the talent, were not the authors of the tales either, only the tellers of them, and that it was the Grimms who got those tales out of the kitchen and into the world.

It's tempting nowadays to brand anyone a misogynist who criticizes or fails to credit a woman. I don't care whether the next book that astonishes me is by a man, a woman, or a collaboration of the two. I do care that it astonish me. The only thing that astonishes me about children's books these days is our need to give thanks for what we've got, which is next to nothing.

#### In the wild

Congratulations to *Harper's* for the beautiful marriage of art and writing in "The Ridge-Slope Fox and the Knife Thrower" [January]. Edward Hoagland writes so sensitively and yet with such guts. I refer particularly to the naturalness with which he combines observations of nature, the "wild" animal, and the domesticated animal—man.

I also want to express appreciation for the high quality of Martin Avillez's illustrations, which not only capture the spirit of the writing but add what any art should—an ambiance of its own. Encore!

SEYMOUR TUBIS  
Santa Fe, N. Mex.

#### Metamorphoses

It was after midnight. I was alone, reading in bed. Mesmerized, perspiring, drooling over M. Cameron Grey's enchanting specimen of *Muridae*. Oh, I wanted him.

Flipping a page, I suddenly noticed that my hands had turned into velvety black paws. I froze at once, swallowing a purry growl. My orange eyes glittered and my elegant tail twitched ever so slightly.

I pounced, raking his shoulder with a too-eager claw as he scuttled beyond my reach. I had lost him.

As I sadly tongued my pads and paws, the black smudge left on them by *Harper's* December cover came off.

I curled up against a pillow to await lean slumber.

RUTH B. PARK  
Kalamazoo, Mich.

"*Muridae*" is a superb piece of writing. More of M. Cameron Grey's abounding perception, humor, and style, please.

BARBARA MINDEL  
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.



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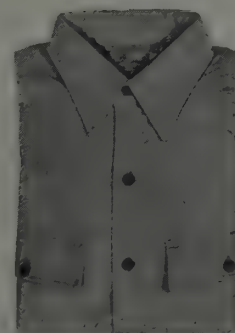
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# LAST OASIS

Exploring the Escalante Canyon in Utah

by Edward Abbey

**W**E'RE DRIVING these two little boats down Lake Powell, Utah—Clair Quist and his girlfriend, Pamela Davis, in one, me and Mark Davis in the other. Mark and Clair are professional river guides, boatmen, characters, honest men. They work for an outfit called Moki-Mac (or Murky Muck) Expeditions, out of Green River, Utah. Work for it? Clair and his two brothers own the damn thing. Whatever it is. What it is is one of the three or four best river-running outfits in the West.

But nobody's working today. This is a holiday outing for the four of us. Our goal is Escalante Canyon and its arboreal system of branch canyons. We're going by way of the so-called lake because we plan to explore a few side canyons, the mouths of which are now under water. Starting at Bullfrog Marina, our course takes us south

*Edward Abbey is the author of The Monkey Wrench Gang and of a forthcoming collection of essays, The Journey Home.*

southwest past old familiar landmarks: Halls Creek Canyon, the south end of the Waterpocket Fold, the Rincon, the mouth of Long Canyon. Around that next bend will be the opening to the Escalante.

Bright blue above and the golden sun at high noon. On either side stand the red walls of what once had been—and will again be—Glen Canyon. No use fretting about it any more. We throw our orange peels overboard to feed the fish. These starving and gullible hatchery fish will eat anything. Clair and Mark amuse themselves by steering as close as they can to the buoys marking the channel, without quite ramming them. There's nothing much else to do out here on this featureless expanse of flat and stagnant water. Pamela dozes; I stare at the cliffs, and at the domes, plateaus, and mountains beyond, remembering what I sometimes wish I could forget: Glen Canyon as it was—the wild river, the beaches, the secret passages and hidden cathedrals of stone, the wilderness alive and sweet, vibrant

with mystery, miracle, magic.

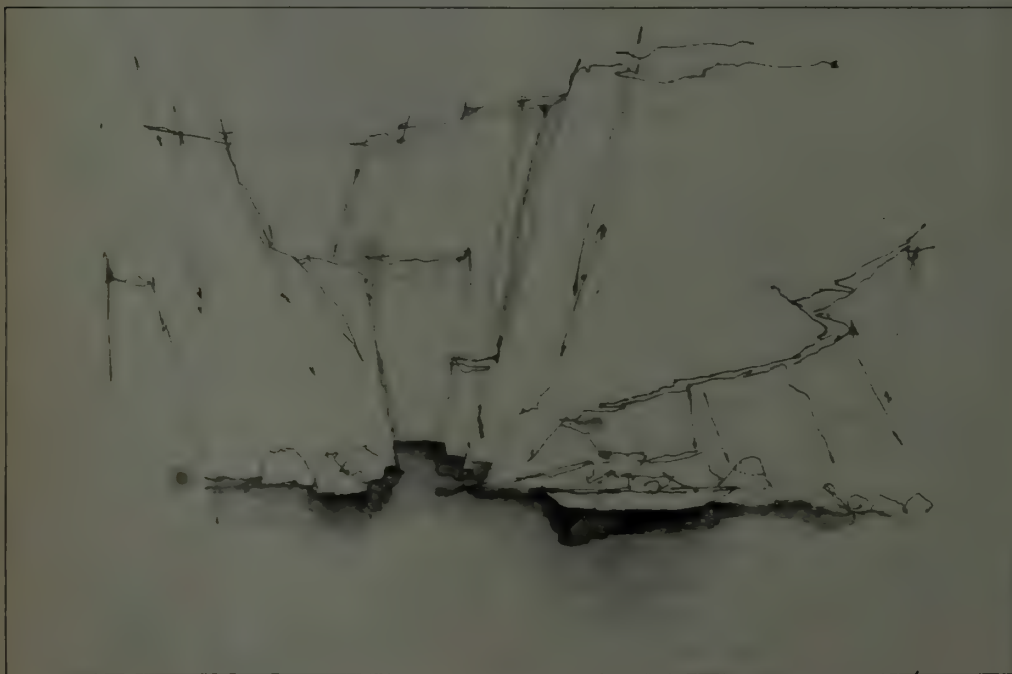
No use fretting. We clear the corner and plane up-canyon into the broad Escalante. Sheer slick vertical walls of Navajo sandstone rising on either side, one wall in blue shadow, the other in radiant light. But nothing grows along those stone barriers; all that was living and beautiful lies many fathoms below, drowned in dead water and buried under slime. No matter. Forget it.

Cabin cruisers roar past; we wallow across their wakes. A houseboat like a floating boxcar comes toward us, passes. The people on board stare, then wave tentatively, unsure whether or not we, in our little open boats, deserve the dignity of recognition. That doesn't matter either. We wave back.

A few miles up the canyon we go ashore in a cove without a name. Others have been here before, of course, as the human dung and used toilet paper, the tinfoil, plastic plates, abandoned underwear, rusty fishhooks and tangled fishing lines, discarded socks and empty beer cans and broken glass clearly attest. But on the shores of Lake Powell, Jewel of the Colorado and National Recreational Slum, you have no choice. All possible campsites look like this one. There is no lower form of life known to zoological science than the motorboat fisherman, the speedboat sightseer.

We have stopped here because we want to climb an old stockman's trail which leads to the rim from this vicinity. We tie the boats to a rock, load our packs, and ascend the humps of bare slickrock toward the skyline 800 feet above. Halfway up we find traces of the abandoned trail—wide, shallow steps chopped in the sandstone, sufficient to enable a horse to climb or descend.

Over the rim, out of sight of the lake and its traffic, we make camp for the night. In the morning we march north



Stanley Stark



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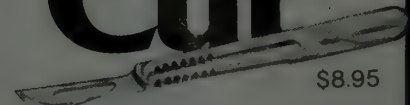


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WILLIAM MORROW

## LAST OASIS

and west over a weird petrified sea of stone waves, mile after mile, and across sandy flats studded with juniper, yucca, single-leaf ash, and then up long monolithic ridges that seem to lead right into the sky. Far beyond, always receding from us, are the salmon-pink walls of upper Stevens Canyon, the red Circle Cliffs, and the incomprehensible stone forms, pale rose and mystical, of the great monocline known as Water-pocket Fold. We'll never get there, this is merely a reconnoiter, a scouting trip, we're not even sure we *want* to get there. Perhaps a few places are best left forever unexplored, seen from a distance but never entered, never walked upon. A few places saved for that last walk, that final journey from which you have neither the plan nor the desire to return. Let them be, for now.

AT SOME POINT out there, among a circle of sandstone mammaries hundreds of feet high, we find a deep groove in the endless rock. Down in the groove stands a lone cottonwood tree, alive and golden with October leaves. Alone in all the square miles of desolate grandeur in this dry Elysium, it is the tree of life. We work our way down to it and sure enough, as we had hoped and half known, we find a series of corroded potholes half filled with water, old rainwater but clear, cold, essential. We fill our jugs and bottles and camp nearby for a couple of days and nights.

Campfire of juniper and ash. The smell of coffee, the incense of juniper smoke. Vast and lurid sunsets flare across the sky, portending storm and winter, but we don't care. Showers of meteors streak across the field of the stars, trailing languid flames. An old, worn moon goes down as the rising sun comes out. In the chill mornings we make breakfast and track off again in another direction. Any direction.

One afternoon we sit by a pool on the lip of stone that overhangs the head of one of the Escalante's many side canyons. The drop-off must be at least 1,000 feet straight down. Down and down and down, your mind falls to the green pond in a sandy basin far below. Perennial springs down there, under this overhanging spout we lie upon; we see the glaze and glitter of a moving stream snaking through jungles of willow, box elder, redbud, and Fremont

poplar toward the Escalante River some where beyond, hidden in its profound meanders.

There is a natural stone arch down there, under the west wall, and balance rocks, free-standing pillars, pinnacle alcoves, grottoes, half-dome amphitheatres. The pathways of many deer follow the contours of the talus slopes. A red-tail hawk patrols the air, soaring beneath us. Ravens clack and croak and flap around, quarreling over nothing. Over anything. Over nothing.

In the shallow pond at our side are hundreds of freshwater shrimp, the queer, grotesque, helmet-headed *Ampelisca aquellius*, swimming back and forth pursuing one another, the large capturing and devouring the small. They look like tiny horseshoe crabs—or like miniature trilobites from the earliest seas. All, come back to haunt us with the memory of the earth's long, strange, tremendous, meaningless, and splendid history. The spiral of time. The circle of life. The vanity of death. The black hole of space.

The hot radiance of the sun, pouring on our prone bodies, suffusing our flesh, melting our bones, lulls us toward sleep. Over the desert and the canyons, down there in the rocks, a huge vibration of light and stillness and solitude shapes itself into the form of hovering wings spread out across the sky from the world's rim to the world's end. Not God—there never was a God—but something unnameable, and more beautiful, and far greater, and more terrible.

My friends and I touch one another smiling, and roll a few boulders in the canyon, only for fun, meaning no harm. We listen, and when the bedrock stops trembling, and after the last faint echoes of our thunder die away, we shoulder our packs and start the long tramp back to where we came from wherever the hell that was, if anywhere. It makes no difference. Willing or not, ready or not, we'll get there.

Behind us, however, back at the canyon's head the sun still blazes down on the shallow pool. The hooded gophers still swim writhing through the water. One thousand feet beneath, the spring continues to flow and the little stream to snake its shining way through the canyon jungle toward the hidden Escalante. The hawk soars, the ravens quarrel. And no man watches. And no woman hears. And no one is there.



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# THE SELF AS SYBARITE

Singles in search of freedom present a captive market

by Roger Rosenblatt

**T**he *Washingtonian*, one of the new breed of city magazines such as *Atlanta*, *Boston*, *San Diego*, *Philadelphia*, and *New York*, has recently issued the *Singles Survival Guide to Metropolitan Washington*. The guide represents a dream of the parent publication, and of the other magazines as well—that, with enough money and self-absorption, all single American men and women will form a sort of Club Méditerranée for all seasons. As yet, few singles have fully realized this dream, but if these magazines have their way, it's only a matter of time. They have already created a world on paper which their readers are beginning to live in, like it or not.

The *Singles Guide*, a catalogue of "Places to Live," "Shopping," "Where to Meet People," "Job Strategy," and so forth, claims that "the stereotyped idea of the lonely single is rapidly disappearing and is being replaced by an awareness of singleness as a positive, individual state." In a way this is true, at least to the extent that all claims made on behalf of singles by singles hustlers are at once true and perverted. As a figure on the streets the "lonely single" is being replaced by something different—by a *class* of singles, an offshoot of the new working class. This is

good news to singles hustlers because the idea of class allows the idea of leisure, the state in which one buys and buys.

The "positive individual state," then, means a large, identifiable group with loose change. This is the group courted by publications like the guide; by the newsletters of singles clubs, singles apartment houses, and singles neighborhoods; by singles bars and the more restrained discos; and by modern-age dating services such as VideoDate, which lets you see and hear your prospective partner on tape and "doesn't accept just anyone off the street, either, so don't worry about chancing a date with a weirdo." To singles hustlers the disappearance of "the lonely single" is essential for profit, yet it is specifically loneliness within the group that they address. So they wind up reaching out to a *lonely class*, aiming both to hold the class together and keep it lonely.

"Where to Meet People," the guide's key section, is the perfect context for both intentions. Singleness may be a "positive individual state," but think of all those other positive individuals out there, yearning for companionship. So the guide recommends: *Bulletin Boards*: "If you find what you're look-

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ing for, you inevitably meet the person who posted the notice." *Bus Stops*: "People standing with you every morning become so familiar that you forge you've never actually been introduced." *Causes*: "It's also a constructive way to vent frustrations about pollution, preservation of wildlife, politics." *Elevators*: "Comments about how long it takes the elevator to come are good, especially if you add how much quicker it would be to climb the stairs to the 10th (or whatever floor you work on) thereby hinting at where your office is." Tip: try to strike up conversations during the ride down so you both end up at the same place."

To these the guide adds *Jogging*, *Pets*, *Fruit and Vegetable Picking*, *The Jhoon Rhee Institute*, *Supermarkets*—"try to push your cart into someone else's"—and *Parachute Jumping*, for which the possible scenarios are infinite. One assumes the "tip" for the elevator-goers applies here equally.

**I**T'S HARD TO KNOW what life is envisaged in this nonsense, if nonsense it is. The picture accompanying the "Single Again" section of the guide shows a castaway in a dinghy, tossed by the cruel sea. Hardly a positive, individual state, but







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even if the picture intentionally mocks the "stereotyped idea of the lonely single," it also calls to mind and heart the seriousness of that idea. To be single or "single again" is to be alone, to shape and keep a life whose dependencies are merely verbal, where so much is at stake in the smallest gesture, postcard, photo, scrap of gossip, or news. Nothing lives unless you give it life—you, like the God of John without whom "was not anything made that was made," and as lonely as that God.

The *Singles Guide to Washington* advises: be the god of the elevator, bus stop, bulletin board, and supermarket; amen. Or buy a *Washingtonian* T-shirt saying "I'm not a tourist. I live here"—"a great way to meet new friends." Assume (charitably) that the advice is not cynical, that in the phthisic imaginations of those who create the guides and discos there is a world where strangers become friends and lovers by way of wisecracks on T-shirts. What world is that? In the dark and complex world, "I'm not a tourist. I live here" is usually a *cri de coeur*. But here, between the cooking classes and ceramics classes and tennis classes and dance classes and yoga classes and plant classes, and TM and kung fu, in the batik, rattan, stereo-component netherworld of positive individuality—here life seems too lightweight for pain.

At the same time, the promoters' attitude toward that life is defensive. Last fall *The Washingtonian* ran a cover story entitled "Can Whites Survive in D.C.?" The magazine's ad slogan is "get the best of Washington before Washington gets the best of you." The guide is called a "survival" guide. Of course, the idea of defensiveness is a modern cliché, but the emotions it plays on are real.

"I'm not a tourist. I live here" is defensive as well, but as a statement of *The Washingtonian* it is also untrue. In the *Singles Guide* and elsewhere, *The Washingtonian* is primarily concerned with tourists—not passers through town, but recent arrivals, bumpkins like Dickens's Pip who must be advised where to shop, eat, get a job, rent a room, "where to meet people." The oddest aspect of the new city magazines is that they're hardly city magazines at all, that with articles on the seventy-seven Washingtonians who most bear watching or "Philly's Ten Sexiest Women and Ten Sexiest Men" or the

twelve best cooks in Atlanta, they seem the least urbane of publications, seem in fact much more like the boys from the provinces giving a monthly cheer for the local teams.

SINCE WASHINGTON has so many transients, its attitude toward itself is often as provincial as *The Washingtonian* could wish. This is a city of families as well as singles—families which look like singles sometimes, splitting themselves among jogging, tennis, and countless lessons for the children, as if the family were not a whole but a three-, four-, or five-headed Hydra developing its parts in preparation for some momentous public performance.

Yet despite the resemblance between them, families do not mix with the singles, at least not in public. That's how it is in America generally these days. Singles bars are not doubles bars; family restaurants, family movies, family cars, mean what they say. Everywhere the culture is precisely stratified, down to fashions, food, painting, music, houses, furniture, dogs. Singles hustlers like this stratification because it exaggerates self-interest within each stratum.

So they aim particularly for the strangest, most isolable group, a self-pampering class of singles who, like ferns, seem to reproduce by asexual spores, and cultivate a stare which says: look at my haircut. Most single people in Washington (and elsewhere) are not like that. They work long and hard in law offices, on newspapers, at government. They take orders and short vacations, bike to the office, get to the Kennedy Center when they ought to, play volleyball where they find two trees, drive out to the Shenandoahs, curl up with three Sunday papers. They read a lot, and on the whole are less likely than family adults to be fooled or pleased by the city's small-town artistic pretensions. They browse in People's drugstores, are amused or embarrassed by the *Singles Guide* they leaf through, but they may buy a copy nevertheless. Why? Because they are in fact as lonely as the guide suggests, and potentially as desperate.

They are caught in their category by an America playing to its separations with furious skill, because the country has lost touch with faith in the future,

and so freezes "singleness" into an adamant present, or because we are always obsessed with freedom, even to its own detriment, or both. Tom Wolfe writes of the "me generation" (where else but in *New York?*), trying to catch a phrase that will stick in the public argot, his essay an instance of his thesis: that people are turning inward. *The Great American Gift Catalogue* and the other gift catalogues given away on airlines show portable blood-pressure kits, stationery embossers, optical tape measures, electric drink mixers, and a dozen more gadgets to fiddle with in one's own tight company. Singles are separations in themselves, and would seem to fit the times perfectly. They could even become the heroes of the age—taciturn cowboys, self-reliant Emersonians—were it not that they are the laughingstocks of the age, intentionally, though softly, made ludicrous by the same institutions which claim to celebrate them.

For no matter how it is actually conducted, no matter how often it is called "a positive, individual state," the single life as advertised and publicly drawn comes to this composite picture: the single is a poseur, a squanderer, a narcissist, a wastrel; he dances the hustle in the apartment-house party room; loafs on his plastic sea horse in the apartment-house swimming pool; lives for lotions, balms, and sprays; is a non-stop lover, drinker, laughter, and more (or less). For him local entrepreneurs arrange picnics, luaus, bus trips, bingo—all forms of distraction, as one would for a child. That, in short, is the life depicted—a child on a spree with an infinite spending allowance: a baby adult.

The trouble with this picture is that it's becoming true. Singles may not yet look or act as childish as they're drawn, but they are as vulnerable as children, and the singles hustlers appreciate this. The new city magazines, the *Singles Guide*, and other shills describe companionship in moronic terms, but they know their market, know that loneliness will prevail over dignity every time, and that even the most sensible people in the world will eventually crawl for company, if necessary, or jump from a plane. That's the beauty of using a truth to wield a lie. Persevere, and you can't get caught, because sooner or later the lie becomes the truth. Here's to later.





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# SKIRMISH OVER *GUERNICA*

Politics on display

by Philip Nobile

**A**N INTERNATIONAL tug-of-war has started over possession of the most famous painting of the twentieth century. The controversy is minor and the spectacle comic. Consider, if you will, a New York museum dictating a certain form of government to a foreign nation as a condition for returning a masterpiece. Imagine further that the museum curator refuses to negotiate even after democratic reforms have swept the country following forty years of Fascism. As implausible as this story sounds, it is currently unfolding on two continents. The prize—Picasso's *Guernica*. Spain wants it, and the Museum of Modern Art is loath to let it go.

According to the wall legend, *Guernica* remains there "on extended loan from the artist's estate." The loan began in 1943, following an American tour for the benefit of Spanish Civil War refugees. As for the disputed meaning of this twenty-five-foot work, created in a six-week frenzy after the systematic bombing of the Basque village of Guernica on orders from Generalissimo Francisco Franco in April of 1937, the legend is exact: "Picasso himself has denied it any political sig-

nificance, stating simply that the mural expresses his abhorrence of war and brutality."

If this were entirely true, the painting would not still be hanging in exile. Nor would William Rubin, the curator of painting and sculpture, have recoiled at the suggestion of an immediate transfer to Spain. The Berkeley art historian Herschel B. Chipp raised the touchy business of *Guernica's* fate in letters to the *Times* of London and the *New York Times*. He submitted that Franco's death made it possible for the mural to go to Spain, citing Picasso's personal desire for such deliverance once Franco had passed away and conditions in Spain improved. He also mentioned that Franco himself had authorized *Guernica's* repatriation in 1969. "It could be a stimulus toward a freer and more humane regime," concluded Chipp.

Rubin was outraged by the proposal. His swift response, cleared by Madame Picasso, indicated that the museum would not give up *Guernica* prematurely. And he was not the least interested in Chipp's gesture of reconciliation.

*Philip Nobile, a contributing editor of Esquire, is the author of Intellectual Skywriting.*

"On the contrary," Rubin remarked. "Picasso made crystal clear on a number of occasions through the years—indeed, confirmed to me in person not long before his death—that *Guernica* should be sent to Spain only when a genuine Spanish republic has been restored." Rubin doubted that Franco had sincerely wished the painting in his country. For not only is *Guernica* a monument to values he deplored, the curator reasoned, but it was executed by an artist who held him in contempt.

Chipp contests this explanation. He insists that Picasso was characteristically imprecise on *Guernica's* future and that Rubin is distorting the recorded evidence in the museum's favor. "It's apparent from his letter," Chipp says, "that he never intends to release the painting. It's the star of his museum."

Rubin replies that Picasso's explicit instructions are denoted in a secret letter written by Picasso's lawyer to the museum in 1969. He will neither disclose nor discuss its contents except to say that the return of a "republic" is specified. If further questions are asked about the document, he threatens to hang up. "The mandate from Picasso is crystal clear. When that mandate

Patricia Dryden





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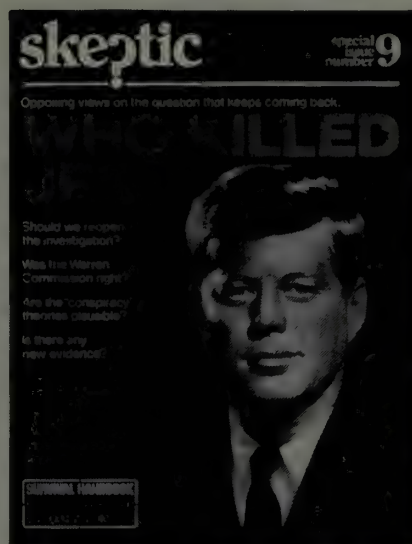
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## SKIRMISH OVER GUERNICA

met the picture will go." Thus Rubin calls Chipp's bluff without having to show his own cards.

Chipp concedes that his idea is a little crazy. Fellow art historians and critics have not queued up behind him, and for good cause: the shift of *Guernica* would leave a disturbing void in the finest collection of Picassos in the world, one that includes *Les Femmes d'Alger*, *Girl Before a Mirror*, *The Charnel House*, *Ma Jolie*, *Harlequin*, *Night Fishing at Antibes*, and *Three Musicians*. But Chipp's argument is not without merit. Rubin's demurrer appears both hurried and at variance with some of the facts of the case.

**W**HAT IS NOT at issue is Picasso's lifelong hatred for the *caudillo*. As a young man Picasso ignored politics. Yet at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 he enlisted on the side of the legally elected Popular Front government. He was appointed honorary director of the Prado; in January of 1937 he etched a small eighteen-scene propaganda strip titled *The Dream and Lie of Franco*, also on exhibit at the museum. To this he added a surrealist poem-statement expressing his disgust for the leader of the rebellion: "fandango of shivering owls of swords of evil omened polyps scouring brush of hairs from priests' tonsures standing naked in the middle of the frying pan." Picasso's memory was long. Though basically apolitical in art as well as life (he joined the French Communist party in 1944 more for his friends than for Marx), he would always withhold *Guernica* from Franco's Spain. He could not cover up the penitence of the civil war.

Although the massacre inspired the mural, produced to fulfill a previous commission for the Spanish pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair, Picasso consistently disavowed anti-Fascist or anti-Franco interpretations of his symbolism. For example, he said that the bull represented brutality rather than Fascism. But Picasso also enjoyed having it both ways. "The truth of the matter," he confessed in 1969 after Spanish students petitioned for the painting, "is that by means of *Guernica* I have the pleasure of making a political statement every day in the middle of New York."

Where does Franco himself fit into the *Guernica* affair? Would he actually have permitted acquisition? Did he really covet a Picasso fig leaf for his dying regime? According to Rubin, no Falangist worthy of the victory of 1939 could conceive of welcoming the painting to Spain because of its anti-Fascist inspiration. The curator hasn't noticed any native ground swell for *Guernica*. However, Premier Luis Carrero Blanco, assassinated in 1973 by Basque terrorists, urged his Director General of the Arts to proceed with the "recuperation" of *Guernica* in December of 1968. Blanco's request was on official stationery and referred to his prior consultation with Franco himself. To make the invitation more attractive, the Spanish government reportedly offered Picasso the room of his choice at the Prado. Ordinarily, *Guernica* would have been displayed at Madrid's new Museum of Modern Art. But it was thought that the artist might be tempted by the opportunity to have his painting hung alongside those of his beloved Velázquez and Goya. He was not, and the "Return *Guernica*" movement died despite sporadic agitation in the Spanish press.

A right-wing mob disrupted a Picasso exhibition in Madrid in 1971, indicating that not all Spaniards are sympathetic to the painter. But this lone incident runs counter to an enduring détente between the artist and his country that must have been tolerated, if not covertly encouraged by high officials. The Picasso Museum in Barcelona was opened as long ago as 1963. Spanish museums and galleries closed in mourning when he died. And the Minister of Education, speaking for the government, cabled condolences to the Picasso family, calling the deceased a "distinguished compatriot and glory of art."

**I**T APPEARS THAT flattery will get Spain nowhere. No republic, no *Guernica*. Chipp sees some bargaining room since a passage from the Museum of Modern Art's confidential letter, leaked by Picasso's lawyer to a French journal, merely refers to the reestablishment of "*les libertés publiques*" as a condition for delivery. Post-Franco Falangism has all but dissolved under King Juan Carlos. Political prisoners have been freed, amnesties granted to exiled revolutionaries, cen-

sorship restrictions relaxed, and strikes allowed. Last November the largely appointed Spanish Parliament voted itself out of existence and provided for general elections by June. The first article of this reform legislation repudiates the dictatorship of the past: "Democracy in the Spanish state is based on the supremacy of the law and the sovereign will of the people."

The withering away of Fascism does not satisfy Rubin. "This is only a call for an election," the curator observes. "Nobody knows what the Right is going to do. But any step in that direction, however small, is a step in the direction that will eventually put the picture back there. It's questionable whether a monarchy with a parliament is what Picasso had in mind." So much for the museum's crystalline mandate. Even reestablishment of public liberties under a democratic parliament is not enough for Rubin and Madame Picasso. What they demand in accordance with Picasso's testament is nothing less than a reversion to the republic, despite the widow's remark to André Malraux in *Picasso's Mask*. "But when Spain is once again a democracy," she says, "we'll go together and take it to Madrid, as he promised." The translation is free. "Democracy" is "*république*" in the French original.

If a strict construction is placed on this clause, more than Juan Carlos will have to go. The Second Spanish Republic (1931-36) not only dissolved the monarchy, it disestablished the Catholic church and the nobility, expropriated wealth and property, approved regional autonomy, secularized education, and legalized Communism. These policies incited civil war; restoring them with the republic might bring on another. "*Guernica*, as everybody knows, is the Spanish people," said Picasso in 1969. Then what if these same people vote for a form of democracy less liberal than the chaotic Second Republic of 1936? Will the trustees of the estate persist in their intransigence? Will the nation that has forgotten Franco be judged undeserving because it does not follow the posthumous advice of Picasso?

Probably. A few months ago, according to Professor Chipp, the head of the Spanish Communist party visited Madame Picasso in France to ask for her support in bringing *Guernica* home. Her answer: not yet.



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# THE EDITH PROJECT

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Bringing out the best in baby

by Jack McClintock

ON AUGUST 16, 1952, Aaron Stern called a press conference in a Brooklyn hospital. Stern, a survivor of Nazi cat-cars, Gestapo assaults, and midnight escapes into the black, snowy woods of Poland and Germany, showed the reporters a baby girl. He gazed raptly into her crib and said: "Meet my daughter, Edith. She is going to be a genius. I shall make her into the perfect human being."

With that Frankensteinian pronouncement, Stern devoted himself to what he calls "an idea that became an obsession"—the Edith Project. For the past twenty-five years, his life has had a benign sort of mad-scientist motif that has brought him into conflict with the educational establishment, his wife, and Edith herself. Stern never swerved from his goal. The beloved daughter, weighing six pounds, seven ounces; nineteen inches long; three weeks premature, conceived in defiance of a doctor's warning to Bella Stern against having children with a man whose war-time experiences had left him with a medical dictionary full of physical and notional maladies—this daughter, Stern vowed, would not be ordinary.

Twenty-one years later Stern was again talking to reporters. He was making the Philippine government the following proposal: he would study the Masaday tribe, a group of cave-dwellers found living in Stone Age isolation, bring back two children, and rear them

to become geniuses (he was eventually turned down). It had worked with Edith, he said, and it would work with them.

"I have done what I promised the world," Stern says. "I have created a superior being."

Dr. Benjamin Fine, onetime education editor of the *New York Times* and a friend of the Sterns', said: "I've watched Edith develop through her teens. Her IQ might possibly be in excess of 200. She is certainly on the level of Einstein."

Edith, now twenty-four, consistently scores about 200 on an IQ scale on which 150 represents "genius"—whatever that may be. She entered school at the customary age of six, already reading two books and the *New York Times* every day. She skipped alternate grades through junior high, and skipped high school entirely to enroll in college at twelve. At fifteen she was teaching higher mathematics at Michigan State and working on her Ph.D.

But Stern's claims, even his accomplishments, have not always gone uncensured. He was warned that he might be creating a monster. Critics called him cruel and self-indulgent, accusing him of stealing Edith's childhood for his own aggrandizement. They suggested he was building a top-heavy structure—all brain and no wit or warmth. They say IQ tests mean little or nothing (a proposition with which Stern agrees: "I have subjected her to the indignities of IQ only to disarm my critics."). Dr. John Freeman, Edith's

department chairman at Florida Atlantic University, has said: "Time will tell if her development was too fast. I'm concerned at all the attention she received, apparently at the urging of her father. This may not prove good for her in the long run. I also question Aaron Stern's claim that he molded her mind. But, yes, she is very bright."

No one disputes that.

**S**TERN HIMSELF cannot say where he got the idea. When asked, he launches into a long and complex tale, obviously told many times before. During the war years Stern lived for two years in a hole he scooped out in the muddy woods of Europe, eating wolf and bulldog meat when he was lucky and nothing when he was not. He was captured by the Germans twice and escaped twice. Once his jaw was crushed by a Gestapo agent's boot. After the war, in a refugee camp at Bad Reichenhall, he organized a school for orphaned street children.

Arriving in the U.S. in 1949, he and Bella, who were married in the Warsaw ghetto only to be separated by the war and later reunited, descended into what amounted to another ghetto: poverty and chronic illness in a Brooklyn tenement. Stern has never been well since. "I became," he says, "a notorious patient, a professional patient." He has had heart disease, hyperthyroidism, and cancer of the jaw, and has been hospitalized 170 times (he keeps

Jack McClintock is the author of the forthcoming *Book of Darts*.



track). It was after one of those times that a vocational rehabilitation worker tested him and concluded that, although Stern spoke six languages (now ten), his intelligence was low. She recommended training as a welder. Instead he enrolled in Brooklyn College and finished in thirteen months.

While Bella worked, Stern, virtually unemployable, spent years writing a book documenting Nazi atrocities, the manuscript of which—1,600 handwritten pages in six languages—disappeared from his car one day while he was detained by Miami police on a traffic charge. In 1971 he wrote another book. This one was about Edith, his real vocation, and it was called *The Making of a Genius*. Stern himself published it, and has sold 3,500 copies.

The Sterns live in a small green-and-white house near the railroad tracks in North Miami Beach. There is a charreusse living-dining room furnished inexpensively ("I am somewhat of an ascetic," says Stern), and stacked in the sun porch are cardboard cartons filled with unsold copies of *The Making of a Genius*. Shelves there were filled with folders of clippings and testimonials to his work. "I have always welcomed publicity," Stern said, "even though Edith has come to think of it as an invasion of her privacy."

Edith had recently taken her first job, with IBM, and moved to the small city of Boca Raton, about forty miles north of Miami, driving down to visit her parents on weekends. Her title was assistant programmer in the development laboratory, but no one could tell me exactly what she did. IBM spokesmen said only, "It's confidential." Edith said, "It's interesting."

Stern and I talked before Edith arrived. He dumped sheaves and folders of papers on the couch between us, speaking all the while of his critics, the "harassment," the difficulty of persuading others that he was not an ogre. He was at the center, he seemed to say, of a hostile universe—a man beset. I asked how he responded to charges that he had sacrificed his daughter's childhood to his own ego.

"Sublimation, I know," he sighed. "Every parent has the desire to fulfill himself through his child. It's not unusual." He paused. "Ask Edith if she missed anything. Those who say I stole my daughter's infancy are wrong. I didn't restrict her; I added to her life."

There had been early disappointments. As a youngster Edith was sometimes "excessively arrogant." She occasionally broke windows and furniture. Once she locked her father in the basement for half a day (she maintains it was an accident). He was not pleased, he said, by her excess weight. In college, Edith changed her major from pre-med, which she had selected as a child because she wanted to cure her father's many ailments when she grew up, to mathematics; Stern was certain it was "to cut the string, to leave me out. In mathematics I cannot follow her progress."

We inspected Edith's library, some 3,000 books and magazines obviously collected by a lover of science fiction and fantasy. There were books by Robert Heinlein, Harlan Ellison, Isaac Asimov, Theodore Sturgeon. There were also Camus, Steinbeck, the Durants. There were novelistic spin-offs from *Star Trek*, a book of B.C. cartoons, and *M\*A\*S\*H Goes to Maine*.

"If she read that many books in the medical field," Stern said, "she'd be transplanting hearts by now."

THE SCULPTING OF Galateas seems an arcane enterprise, but there was nothing mysterious in Aaron Stern's method. He calls it "total educational immersion" which, he says, "assumes that intellectual growth begins at birth and ends at death. It invites the utilization of all resources. When Edith wanted to go to the park, we passed by a construction site and she learned about physics. If we passed by a picket line, she learned about civics." Since he was unemployed, Stern gave Edith more attention, starting earlier, than most children get. And he demanded more back. All this may not be especially rare, but Stern's intensity and unwavering persistence over a period of many years surely are, and they may be unique.

The Edith Project began immediately after the infant was brought home and established in her crib, a blanket-draped bureau drawer. Stern announced that the family's cheap radio would be tuned to WQXR twenty-four hours a day. "Classical music," he swore, "shall beautify her soul." Except for repairs, the radio played for years.

Baby talk was forbidden. Stern, then himself perfecting his English, read

and talked incessantly, repeating words and holding bright magazine pictures before Edith's scarcely focused eyes. He gave her flash cards with numbers and animal pictures on them, reading off the name of each. As she grew he plastered old travel posters around the family's single room and spun tales for her of castles in Bavaria, pyramids in Egypt, and airliners over Manhattan. He filled her crib with multiracial dolls from the U.N. gift shop. He talked. For weeks little happened, and then he noticed that Edith would cry if the radios were tuned to jazz or popular music. Then she began to recognize the dolls.

Edith was five months old and being breast-fed by her mother when the conflict between the two parents first came out in the open. "This period is conducive to learning," Stern said, and announced that from then on he would feed the baby.

"Please don't deny me this pleasure," Bella pleaded. But from then on Edith got her sustenance from Aaron.

When she was eleven months old, Stern asked her how old she was. She rummaged in her crib, picked up the "10" flash card and held it up. Stern waited. Then Edith raised a chubby forefinger beside it. Stern kissed her many times (he used kisses and candy as rewards for good performance), and she counted aloud, "One, two, three, four, five..." When she did not learn well later on, he would forbid her to read.

From Stern's diary, April 1, 1953: "Like the spring sunshine which melts the dreary, all-encompassing icy landscape, so does Edith's intellect emerge, in all its splendor."

At one year she spoke simple sentences and identified letters on flash cards, at two she knew the alphabet. When she was one-and-a-half, someone gave the family an ancient set of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. "When I can read," announced Edith, "I will read the whole set." And Stern placed volume one into her crib. Today he says she had read it straight through by age four-and-a-half; Edith cannot remember, but believes she must have skipped around a little.

When she was two, portraits of Gandhi, Tolstoy, Schweitzer, and Einstein were hung on the walls, and there were lectures on humanitarianism. Then there was arithmetic which Stern taught using an abacus, and walks through



he neighborhood, during which they would read aloud in unison: "Mermaid Avenue," "Barber," "Motorola."

Father and daughter were inseparable, shutting Bella out. She went to work; they studied and played. "You have stolen my child from me. You stole her childhood," Bella said. He scarcely heard.

When Edith was two-and-a-half, her father took her to visit Albert Einstein, who, several years before, had helped Stern get admitted to the Mayo Clinic for surgery that cured his cancer of the jaw. Edith read from the newspaper for Einstein, who confessed that he had not learned to read until he was seven.

Edith would visit her father in the hospital. She learned to read his EKG, found a stethoscope and listened to his heart, pestered physicians for definitions of words she found in medical books, and finally—inevitably—disputed their diagnoses. She announced that she would become a doctor. Stern kissed her many times.

When the neighborhood children began to talk about storks, Stern held a brief debate with himself and then disrobed to teach Edith about male anatomy and human reproduction. Edith, then five, relayed the facts of life to her friends on the block, an enlightenment which occasioned angry parental visits. It reminded everyone of the visits of years before, when Edith had dispatched Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny.

Edith horrified the neighbors, what with telling playmates their *epidermis* was showing, or that they displayed *narcissistic* tendencies. But Stern appalled them. The apartment was crowded with documents, transcripts, and boxes of grisly photos as Stern labored on his book of Nazi atrocities. Edith chose the photos. The neighbors tsk-ed. And Stern would say: "You allow your child to watch television, which glorifies crime and violence, while I am teaching Edith the irrationality of violence and hate."

When Edith went to school after the family moved to Miami, Stern quickly earned a reputation as a bore and a nuisance. He was the lone and embattled innovator striving against the forces of darkness and barbarism. His unscheduled classroom visits struck terror into teachers' hearts. "Her father drove us crazy," recalls a school official. "He avalanched us with letters,

pestered us on the telephone, interrupted school-board meetings. But how could we change the entire system just to suit one person?"

The Sterns' son, David, was born when Edith was seven, and Bella drew the line. "I want one child, just one, to grow up normal." So David's training was less intense, though he is very bright. His ambitions, unlike Edith's, are modest. When he was nine a reporter asked David whether he wanted to be a genius. He reflected a moment and then said simply: "No."

Everyone thought Stern was pushing too hard. Edith would be mediocre in spite of it, they said, or smart as new leather but socially retarded, loony, weird, goofy, lonely, mad, marooned in her own uniqueness. In school she cared more for her books than for her looks. Her popularity, never very high, would increase just before exams, when classmates would call and ask for help. She was perennially interviewed and written about, and received bagful of letters from advertising agencies, religious nuts, educators, quiz shows. There were even proposals for Stern as well as Edith. Not long ago a thirty-year-old California woman asked if he would

father her next child so that her offspring would be favored with his marvelous genes. Her husband wouldn't mind, she said. But Stern, who has always claimed that genes have little to do with intelligence, declined.

And is Stern content with the result of the Edith Project? "I will confess something to you," he said carefully. "I am not very impressed with Edith. She could have been much more given what the input has been. I don't believe she has reached the plateau of Einstein or that she is a genius." He paused again. "She will be a genius when she makes a contribution."

**B**EFORE I MET EDITH, I had thought of Mr. Spock, the superior being played by Leonard Nimoy on Edith's favorite TV show, *Star Trek*. She did not resemble him. She wore a gray sleeveless dress, a bit too tight and short. She was, she said, about twenty pounds overweight, and she looked five years older than she was. Her face was pale and a bit puffy, with a slightly receding chin. But her eyes, behind the lenses of wire-rimmed glasses, were

# Encounter austria

## I strutted with a Tyrolean band

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I watched the sunlight blaze from the "Goldenes Dachl", gold-roofed indulgence of Emperor Maximilian I. In a mood as baroque as the Imperial Palace I made ready for evening... and anything.

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## THE EDITH PROJECT

very pretty—large and dark with good strong brows. She reminded me of the solemn, competitive, bright kids I'd known in school, those who would strain forward in their seats to answer every question.

Edith was curt, almost sullen, and I learned later that her father had made the appointment without consulting her. Now he said severely, "I expect you to talk to him straightforwardly and in a civil manner." Edith squirmed. I was halfway through saying she was not obliged to talk at all when Bella said, glaring at Stern, "You have no call to make a speech like that. Edith, like me, is just home from work, and she is tired."

Stern said, "She looks mad to me."  
"She is tired," Bella said flatly.

Edith said nothing.

Stern put the papers away, and we went in to a dinner of excellent borscht with carrots and apples, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and blackberry Manischewitz. Bella, toiling in the kitchen, said good-naturedly, "I'm the only person in this house who works." Stern alone did not laugh. "I am not such a liability," he said, and whispered to me later, "We are a closely knit family, though you see there is a certain conflict with my wife."

There was also a conflict with Edith; it erupted once again during dinner. Stern was chatting amusingly about how "she" denied enjoying publicity but was invariably the first to send off for reprints. Edith put a hand to her throat and gasped, "I do *not*!" and bolted to her room.

"I was talking about Bella. *Bella*, not you!" he shouted after her.

Edith later returned to the table, in a better mood. Passing the platter of chicken too fast, she dropped a thigh and a breast. Everyone laughed, and when Bella said, "Why are you so klutzy?" Edith laughed, too.

Edith willingly admits to her clumsiness. She had given up the violin years before partly because her fingers had grown too fat, and had been plagued by the same problem in her year of premed training. ("My fingers wouldn't work. I'd try to cut up the worms and I'd always mess it up.") She does not, however, admit to being bothered by it. "I don't care for my body," Edith says flatly, "I'd be happy to leave it home in the morning."

Such certainty is present in Edith's

reply to nearly every question, as if she never thinks out loud because she already knows the answers. All her life she has performed—for her father, for teachers, for Albert Einstein, for the neighbors and the reporters. She learned as a child of eight that she could pontificate and have her words duly set down in print to read the next day. She was tagged very early as a whiz kid, a girl genius, and it would be surprising if she did not become a practiced know-it-all, probably without knowing it.

Still, though Edith seldom laughs spontaneously, she manages to have a sense of humor about herself. The day after the chicken dinner, she and her father sat side by side at a sticky Formica table in the employee's cafeteria at Sears, where Bella works as a saleswoman. Edith badly wanted a cigarette. She had been smoking since she was twelve and the week before had quit for the third time. As we spoke, she nervously fondled a lighter. I asked Stern:

"Have you created the perfect human being?"

"Perfection is utopian. But she is destined for greatness."

"Edith?"

She replaced the lighter in her purse, pushing aside a paperback book called *The Weird Ones*, and said with a glance at her father: "How can imperfection create perfection? But I'm—you're asking me if I'm a perfect human being. I'm going to feel silly if I say yes."

I was startled. "Are you tempted to?"

Her answer, as always, was ready: "I'm sitting here overweight, having withdrawal symptoms from something as silly as cigarettes, and wishing I had something sweet to stick in my mouth, and you're asking me if I'm perfect?"

"But I'm delighted with the outcome of his experiments on my mind," she added. If she had children of her own, she said, she would rear them in the same way.

That was shortly after she had moved away from her parents' home. When we talked later, Edith was still working for IBM, was "immersed in real life in the business world," and doing relatively well.

"I'm independent now," she asserted. "I have no more problems than others who have strong parents. They are somewhat loath to realize I no lon-

ger accept the house rules, but I've broken my father of bad habits like committing me to be somewhere and then being angry when I don't show up."

Wilfrid Sheed has written about having been "a brutal case of precocity, a disease which can make both childhood and adulthood wretched, with just a few good years in between." When I read the quotation to Edith, she was startled and said that it made no sense.

"It was *not* a wretched childhood," she protested, "and I'm *not* having a wretched life. Of course, being a former child prodigy is like yesterday's newspaper when you're grown up. It's no longer as impressive as it was. When you're fifteen and just graduated, it's one thing, but when you're twenty-four and have graduated at fifteen, it's lost some of its immediacy."

Sooner or later, what she calls "the horrid truth" comes out, and people realize that she is *that* Edith Stern ("I have a problem with friends who are overproud, shall we say"), but it doesn't bother her.

If Edith and Aaron Stern are telling the truth, and they seem to be, his critics were mistaken. She is not a perfect human being. She has a few neurotic tics, but she functions perfectly well. She has her own car, she dates occasionally, though not seriously. She has lost weight; she still battles her addiction to tobacco.

She has thrown herself into so many pursuits that the uncharitable might assume she protests her well-roundedness too much. When I asked if I could reach her by telephone with a few further questions, she said, "If you can find me. I'm leaving on vacation soon, and—let's see. Monday is bowling, Tuesday is karate practice, Thursday is volleyball. . . ." She is taking tennis lessons, was recently certified as a scuba diver, and is interested in underwater photography.

She is having fun.

And the great contribution for which she has been so carefully prepared? Does she feel the world watching, waiting for the fulfillment of her father's promise? No, she said, which struck me as quite a healthy reply for a girl of twenty-four. "I refuse to admit it or see it. I'll be disappointed only if I don't do what I choose to do, and I haven't chosen yet." Her future plans? She said, "I'll do what amuses me. That's the only plan I've ever had."



## BUREAUCRATS REDUX

The same old new faces

by Brock Brower

LOOKING OVER the new Cabinet, I realize that the last time I had three of the names—Harold Brown, Cyrus R. Vance, and Joseph Califano—on a list of my own was when I interviewed them about their former boss, Robert McNamara, nearly a decade ago. The piece ran in *Life* (May 10, 1968), full of their operational insights into this highly geared, overdriven man, but with very little said about the agony of Vietnam, et cetera. Little by them, less by McNamara. He demurred for them all, really, arguing (this was long before the Pentagon Papers) that internal dispute over policy was privileged. "That's raw material," he insisted. "Not history." He would wait upon history. "It's going to be very interesting to see ten years from now what the judgment will be." Well, we are almost to that ten, and I don't find history much changing its earlier view, but one judgment that might be made as these three protégés enter the Carter Administration is *plus ça change, plus c'est le même* McNamara.

This may seem to many like a continuing war blight upon the land, but I can't quite see it that way. It is true that McNamara and Co. did a great deal to sow dragon's teeth in the Sixties, but in the end they did far more, especially during McNamara's last days at the Pentagon, to gather them again.

Brown, Vance, even Califano—variously privy to his soul-searching over Vietnam—passed through their own turmoils of conscience, with Vance finally and directly advising Johnson to close down the war. However, the most important question to consider now is not their guilt but our prospects; to examine the ways in which these three men served McNamara, helped extend his almost shamanic hold over the bureaucracy, and so apprenticed for their own future careers as the next wizards of this ever-expanding Oz.

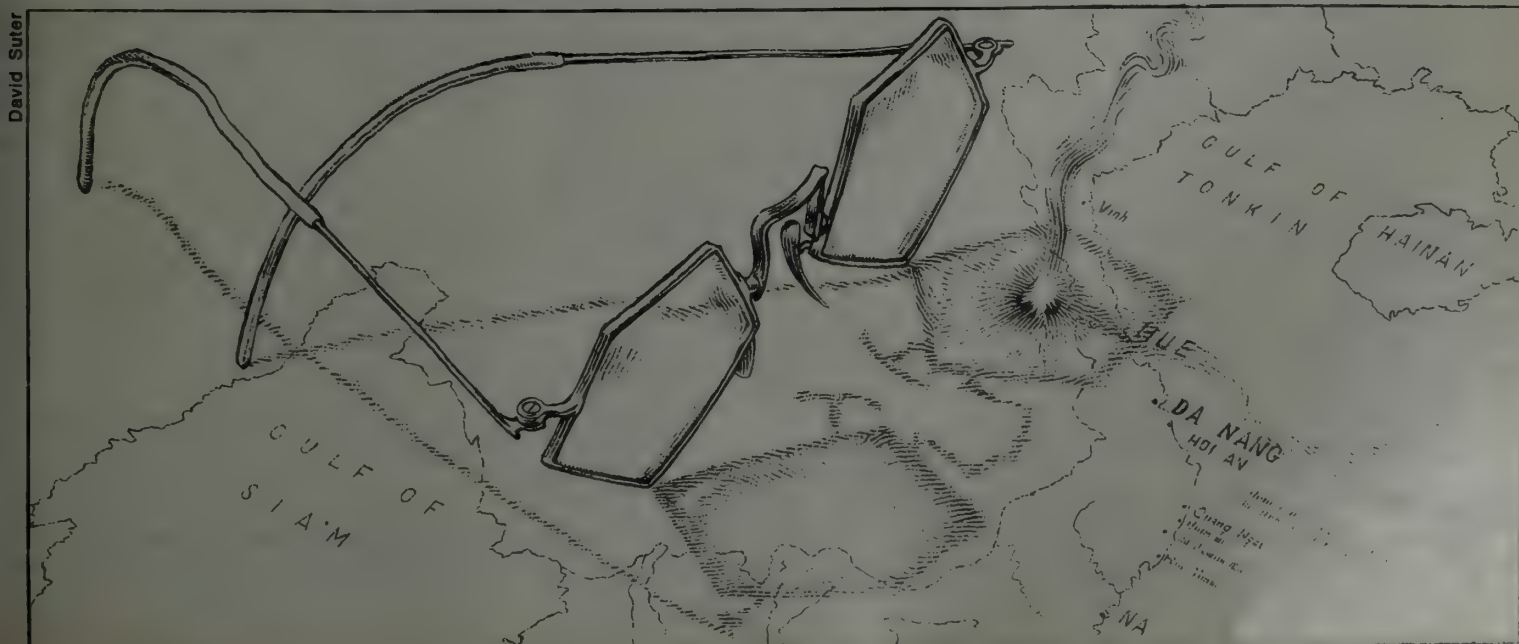
BY LATE 1967, the only one of the three still to be found at the Pentagon was Harold Brown. McNamara had promoted him to Secretary of the Air Force, from Director of Defense Research and Engineering, and he was in the throes of deciding whether the Air Force would have a new bomber.

Increasingly that decision reminds me of the deliberations at the mad tea party, nothing ever settled, just everybody moving one more place along the clean tablecloth behind the Mad Hatter. Even more so should it remind Harold Brown, since he sat down to his first dirty teacup as long ago as

*Brock Brower is a frequent commentator on political events. His most recent book is The Late Great Creature, a novel.*

McNamara's efforts to stop the B-70, which he joined. Few may recall the ancient struggle, but it brought on what passed in the Sixties for a constitutional crisis. President Kennedy had to have that famous meeting in the Rose Garden with the late Carl Vinson, to convince him that Congress should not appropriate money for the B-70 over McNamara's objections. Luckily Vinson acquiesced, because the B-70 would have been one real Buck Rogers albatross. Among its proposed inner organs was a TV screen for viewing the enemy targets whizzing along below, the only problem being that the speed of the B-70 would have produced nothing but a fly-by blur, even in Cinemascope.

That fiasco only finished Curtis LeMay, and not the Air Force's hopes of a follow-on bomber for the B-52. The next model was an aeronautic hybrid capable of supersonic altitudes, transcontinental hedge-hopping, over-the-horizon radar scansion, and probably flying blind and upside down through the Moscow subway. As Secretary of the Air Force, Brown decided in favor of this all-purpose aircraft. ("Where you stand," says the political scientist Steve Bailey, "is where you sit.") It has never been built, but its outlines keep appearing in the aerodynamics of every proposed flying machine, most recently in the looming silhouette of the B-1.





I remember that, at the time, Harold Brown—though often a critic of McNamara's policies—struck me as quintessentially of McNamara's cast of mind. He was intellectually systematic, formidable, laconic, always well up on the numbers, but also aware of the larger schema in which the numbers figured, that frame of the world that one wrong move might break. Since going to Cal Tech as president, he has shown even more concern about the fragility of that frame, working on arms control and condemning such cheap, infernal engines of destruction as the cruise missile. It is altogether possible—as his hawkish critics charge—that he will do his utmost to keep the numbers down to where the delicate balance of terror still holds true, undisturbed by any appalling new generation of first-strike weapons.

But I can also see him, in just as typical a McNamara fashion, as Secretary of Defense himself, deciding to stack all those dirty teacups once and for all, by moving the issue off the table, out of public debate, and into the numbers, where he could end up deciding the fate of the B-1 (much as McNamara did with the ABM) very adroitly, all the numbers tallying, *both ways*.

If Brown possessed the McNamara mind-set, Cyrus R. Vance was much more the McNamara man, principally because he always brought the cool benefit of counsel to the heated arguments that methods like systems analysis tend to generate. Vance was the consummate negotiator at moments when the facts refused to stay objective. Such a lawyerlike approach impressed even the fact-obsessed McNamara, who now likes to say that his better memos were written "like a lawyer's brief."

At the time I went to see him, Vance was already back practicing with his old firm, Simpson, Thacher and Bartlett. He gave only family reasons for doing so: he had developed a bad back, he had five kids to raise, a living to earn, it was time. No comment on the controversies of the day, only mild and dignified praise for those with whom he had worked, who might have been standard statuary in the Hall of All Reasonable Men.

Yet, from all private indications, Vance was actually pleased to be back in private life for maybe the first six

months out of the next ten years. Twice, early on, he all but ran off on major diplomatic missions for Johnson, to Korea and—achieving a large personal success—to Cyprus. He took very seriously his work for both the United Nations Association and the Council on Foreign Relations. As late as last December, he came out strongly for an arms-control program, and a few years back he even chaired the commission investigating police corruption in New York City, which brought us Serpico. So why does he leave such an unpublic impression, even as he is put forward as the only man for the top job?

It could all be a matter of style, and not even the Secretaryship is likely to change that. When Vance worked for McNamara, there always came the moment when it was time to marshal the arguments, to sit down with a yellow legal pad, list all the pros and cons, and come up with a conclusion. It was the rational, clear- and/or cold-eyed decision-making process with which Robert McNamara will always be identified.

"But, you know," I was told, "Bob was never as good at it as Cy. With Bob you always got that little bit of personal feeling in there. But with Cy"—he shook his finger—"never."

JOSEPH CALIFANO told me that story when I went to see him at the White House. Johnson had finally managed to steal him from McNamara, and put him to work creating the Great Society's full domestic program that Califano, over at HEW, will now have to administrate. One of the things Califano pointed out to me then is that McNamara would not let him go to the White House until he, McNamara, was satisfied Johnson had something that was worthy of Califano's talents. He was extremely protective of his people. They, in turn, tried to serve the public interest he wished to embody, wherein lies the sore error of the following doleful tale.

Califano and Vance worked very closely together at the Pentagon, in a tandem which began after Califano wrote to Vance, asking for an interesting job. The jobs he held were usually one behind Vance's own, making for shared responsibilities, one of which was for the containment of domestic riot. In 1967 Detroit suddenly erupt-

ed into racial violence, and Johnson, through McNamara, through Vance, ordered out the Army paratroopers. It was the first—and in many ways the ugliest—of the Sixties riots, the shock of which kept the Secret Service from letting Presidents or even candidates go near Detroit for much longer than has ever been publicly admitted.

McNamara was deeply disturbed by the Detroit riot, and made it clear to Vance and Califano that, from now on, he wanted to *know* whenever something like that was about to happen anywhere in the country. The exact schedule of imminent urban unrest was not readily available, but there were steps that could be taken to gather some kind of intelligence.

Califano did take those steps, and several years later the first known incidence of domestic surveillance of political activists by the military made a brief flurry in the headlines—not the kind of uproar the CIA's 10,000 names caused much later, but enough to cause Joe Califano, looking back, to wonder how riot control had ever got so far out of hand that the Army Security Agency was keeping files on the 1968 supporters of Eugene McCarthy.

Perhaps the greatest irony—exactly the sort that Califano had best watch out for in the mass confusion of HEW—is that the ASA, working diligently to compile those files, had to fight for space on the first floor with some new fellows who were just coming in to start writing the Pentagon Papers.

There you have them, the New Men, the epigoni. They possess a breadth of harsh savvy and a range of tough experience that only the undeclared-war years with Robert McNamara could have brought them. None of us would wish them back into those bad days again, but we can hope that one lesson has emerged from that singular effort to restrain the world from its plurality, its disorganization, its slow thought and shortness of breath. W. H. Auden put it well thirty years ago, when he asked the graduating Harvard Phi Beta Kappas of 1946 not "to commit a social science," but to follow three simple directives:

*Read The New Yorker, trust in God,  
And take short views.*

Subscribe to whatever magazines or faiths you choose, gentlemen—but please, short views, short views. ■■■





# Tune in on the Real World

**In Britain**, television watchers will soon be tuning in to an electronic newspaper on their TV screens.

**In France**, there is a Secretary of State for the Condition of Women.

**In Germany**, there's a plan for workers to share in economic decision making as members of corporation boards.

**In Denmark**, the ballet is so well subsidized that it is said the "artists and staff positively bask in tax money."

**In Sweden**, there are no slums, no one is poverty stricken in times of illness and everyone can look forward to help in his old age.

Quite obviously, all these countries know something we don't. And the more we learn about what's being done in other countries, the more we can apply that knowledge to our own.

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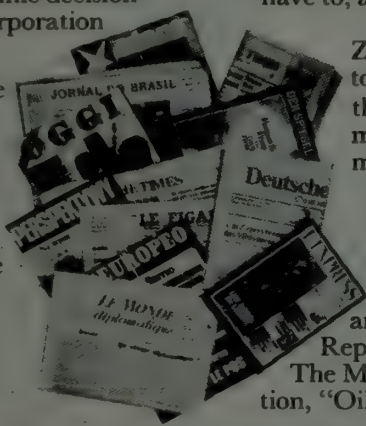
**Isaac Asimov:** "Absolutely vital [so] we may react to the world as it is. . ."

**Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.:** "Little would seem more necessary now. . ."

**Alvin Toffler:** "First-aid for culture-blindness. . ."

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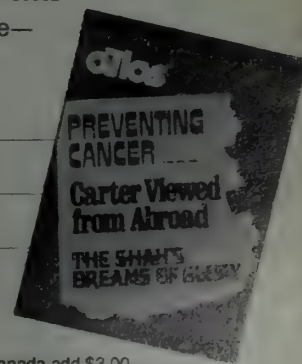
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# THE CAPITALIST PARADOX

Mind against matter

by Lewis H. Lapham

*The populace may hiss me, but when I go home and think of my money, I applaud myself.*

—Horace, 25 B.C.

ON RESIGNING as a trustee of the Ford Foundation in January of this year, Mr. Henry Ford II took the trouble to write a letter giving vent to his confusion, annoyance, and dismay. The newspapers published passages from the letter and made prominent news of the fact that he found it necessary to remind the staff of the foundation that it was associated with "a creature of capitalism." Things apparently had come to such a dismal state of mutual embarrassments that Mr. Ford felt obliged to apologize for his use of the word *capitalism*. Conceding that the word might seem "shocking" to many of the people employed in the vineyards of philanthropy, Mr. Ford proceeded to his defense of the old ways and old order:

*I'm not playing the role of the hard-headed tycoon who thinks all philanthropoids are Socialists and all university professors are Communists. I'm just suggesting to the trustees and to the staff that the system that makes the foundation possible very probably is worth preserving.*

Alas, poor Henry Ford. All that money, all those good intentions squandered on a crowd of pious fools and the search for social conscience. He must have wondered what had become of the labor riots of his youth, and the general recognition that capitalism presupposes a norm, if not of violence, at least of unrelenting strife. His letter had a forlorn sound to it, as if Mr. Ford knew that it would be ignored, or, more probably, received with the thin and distant smiling of people who know themselves to stand on the side of righteous principle. McGeorge Bundy, the foundation's president and, as one of the chancellors of the Vietnam war, a man well versed in the use of the explanatory phrase, declined to be drawn into an exchange of views.

"There really wasn't a blow-up," he told the press. "There is neither more nor less to this than meets the eye."

Asked for further comment on an occasion ripe with the chance of portentous meaning, Mr. Bundy elaborated his remark as follows:



Lewis H. Lapham  
is the editor  
of Harper's.



Lewis H. Lapham  
THE  
CAPITALIST  
PARADOX

"One of the things we've always valued about Henry Ford is candor."

The times had changed, and Mr. Ford might as well have tried to explain himself to the wandering disciple of an alien *roshi*. The paradoxes implicit in the system of capitalist enterprise have become increasingly distasteful to the men who, like Mr. Bundy, preside over the formulation of enlightened opinion. The politics of the age, in its literary and academic as well as its governmental forms, tends toward earnest simplification. Hardly anybody likes to admit that the highest achievements of the Western mind spring from the same soils that nourish the lush flowerings of corruption and greed. On the one hand the capitalist system implies the exploitation of any available weakness, but on the other hand it encourages the freedom of thought and experiment. The two genies emerge from the same bottle, simultaneously and without benefit of ideology. In November of last year, in the same week that the usual number of public officials were rounded up on the usual suspicions of fraud, seven Americans received the Nobel Prize.

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A cautionary tale

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THIS IS A PARADOX of which I'm reminded at least twice a week by observers of the contemporary scene who pass in and out of the office with the surfeit of bad news. They present me with evidence of graft in Washington or St. Louis; they offer proofs of price-fixing in the oil or aircraft industries; they bring word of illegal campaign contributions, of pay-offs, bribes, and stock-market swindles. While I am sympathetic to the suffering inflicted on the victims of these crimes, I cannot help but be surprised by the innocence of my informants, who, when I fail to respond to their news with what they judge to be appropriate expressions of rage and alarm, tax me with indifference to the wickedness of the world. I take for granted Jefferson's dictum that money, not morality, constitutes the principle of commercial nations.

If I ever had any doubts on this point I was relieved of them by an old and accomplished entrepreneur with whom I once spent several days in a house overlooking the sea. He was then a man in his seventies, wheezing and sly, married to a woman much younger than himself who sent him postcards from Paris and Antibes. He had undergone major surgery that spring and didn't expect to live through the autumn.

"She'll marry a novelist," he said, "and they'll talk about the unimportance of money."

We sat on deck chairs, listening to the crying of gulls. The view of the horizon moved him to a series of last meditations on the nature of a successful business deal.

As a young man he had inherited, together with his brother, a large and prosperous drug company. Shortly after World War II he had grasped the possibilities of what later came to be known as the multinational corporation, and he traveled through the poorer countries of the world setting up dependent subsidiaries.

"Whenever possible," he said, "seek out dictators and avoid doing business in democracies. They're unstable. The trouble with them is that you have to bribe too many people, most of them at least twice. If something goes wrong, somebody to whom you just paid \$10,000 stands up in whatever they call the Congress in those places and makes a speech about American exploitation. Nobody stays bought."

Most of all, he liked to tell his story about the Muslim state in which both partners agreed to take 100 percent profit from their enterprise. For a few years the owners of the subsidiary were satisfied with this division of spoils, but then they began to think that maybe 100 percent wasn't enough, that maybe the Aladdin's lamp of twentieth-century technology entitled them to 200 percent. Having no wish to disturb the American corporation, they proposed to increase the price to their own people. The Minister of Health objected to this for humanitarian reasons, and for a period of several months nothing could be done. The prospect of negotiation improved when the minister was taken to a hospital for a routine appendectomy. Soon after he arrived on the operating table, the surgeons informed him that the hospital had exhausted its supplies of anesthetic. They were terribly sorry, of course, but there appeared to be some difficulty about the cost of manufacturing morphine. The surgeon apologized for the inconvenience while holding the point of a knife to the minister's belly, explaining further that the pain of incision would be so great as to put the minister into a state of shock, which, although momentarily unpleasant, would in itself be a kind of anesthetic. The minister agreed to the rise in price.

The story was presented to me as a fable or a cautionary tale, and whenever the old man arrived at the moral of it he would be seized by a fit of choking laughter, slapping weakly at his knee in a gesture meant to convey dramatic emphasis.

"By God," he would say, "that's what business is all about."

He died in October, and his wife married an Ambassador to the United Nations.







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THE  
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PARADOX

TO A GREATER or lesser extent we are all greedy and frightened children, and if the possession of money comes to mean the difference between life and death, then how is it possible to blame people for whatever they do to obtain it? The history of American business is shot through with incidents of theft, graft, and fraud. The revisionist historians who delight in the obviousness of this, and who seek to make of their discoveries a theory of consistently evil intent, neglect to mention the other genie in the bottle. There is also the history of American invention in the arts and sciences. The two traditions oppose one another, and to ignore the competition between them is to belittle the striving of the human spirit. Although a capitalist society pays huge sums of money for the popular imitations of art or truth, it seldom can recognize, much less reward, its greatest genius. It allows people to stumble into visions of their own truth because it considers such visions irrelevant. In a totalitarian society the lines of intellectual inquiry threaten to expose the fiction of the state and therefore lead inevitably to the offices of the secret police; in a capitalist society they lead into the obscurity of a small room where Herman Melville sits writing prose or out onto the waters of Great Peconic Bay, where Einstein drifts in a sailboat and wonders about the refraction of light.

Given the American capacity for transforming anything and everything into an article of merchandise, nobody can escape the seductions or the intimidations of money. That so many people refuse the offers and resist the threats testifies to their larger understanding of the character of human life. They make their choices not so much on moral grounds as on the basis of empirical observation, because the obsession with money, as witness the long and unhappy life of Howard Hughes, reduces a man to the gibbering sycophancy of a frightened ape.

The Ten Commandments stand as the precursor to Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights. The mind tries to free itself from the confusions of murder and lust because it seeks the greater excitements of courage, faithfulness, truth, and love. The lesser excitement of money becomes clear in the perspective of time. Who can remember last year's tycoon? Who can name the ten most powerful men in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1845? When I read the list of names published in the pages of *New York* magazine ("The Power Brokers," "The Men Who Really Count," et cetera) I think of the patrons and donors disguised as Magi who stand around in the foreground of Renaissance religious painting. They peer at the Madonna

with the same anxious obscurity of Henry Kissinger staring into the camera of a photographer from *Women's Wear Daily*. They have paid for the space, and they hope to be introduced to the best people in heaven.

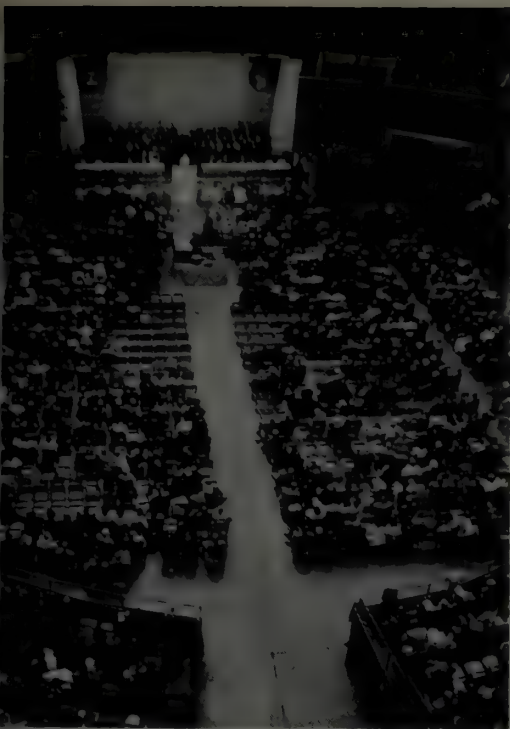
Over the course of time it has been the power of the spirit and the imagination that has shaped the clay of civilization. The greatness of man expresses itself in the force of mind, in Bach's music or Shakespeare's plays, in the art of da Vinci, the physics of Newton, or the theories of Marx. Money follows with the baggage, traveling among camp followers and putting up the tents. It can maintain the status quo, whether of tyranny or democracy; it can gild markets or temples, employ 400,000 automobile workers or Benvenuto Cellini, buy Panama or *Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer*. It is a power worth having, but without the greater power of thought it amounts to little more than the temporary dominion of a bully.

If a price can be set on the worth of a man's labor but not on the worth of his dreams or his hope of the future, then the mainspring of capitalism must rest on a paradox. In the realm of politics the paradox presents itself as a balance between the pressure for social justice and the inertia of greed. The shifting weight in this balance sustains as fair and equitable a redistribution of the wealth as seems to me possible in a society that tries to make an equation among creativity, profit, and survival. The election of each new administration, sometimes even the election of a new chairman to the House Armed Services Committee, gives rise to the creation of new wealth.

During the several weeks prior to President Carter's inauguration I was reminded of this by a series of conversations with people who hoped to improve both their own and the public interest. They spoke of better deals for the disaffected minorities, of innovative approaches to the troubles in Africa and the Middle East. But they also spoke of the public money moving in different directions, of industries and groups of industries that could expect to add to their net worth. Several of them had been offered places in the new government, but the chance to go to Washington had both assets and liabilities. In an otherwise unremarkable coffee shop on Seventh Avenue, in the midst of people talking about the miseries of the Broadway theater and the question of that Sunday's Super Bowl game, I remember watching R. work out his accounting on a paper napkin. A small, unkempt man in his early middle age, a lawyer by profession, who ceaselessly searched his pockets for notes and messages from himself, he reduced the







Annually, delegates from America's nearly 1,000 rural electric cooperatives and public power districts which serve some 25 million people across the nation, meet to formulate and adopt policies on national issues.

## The simple fact is that conservation makes it possible to stretch out the world's dwindling energy resources while we develop new technologies



More doctors, water and sewer systems, and improved housing are today's community development targets for rural electrics, longtime leaders in spearheading better social and economic programs for local citizens. Robert Mace, manager of San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Monte Vista, Colo., is president of one of the state's five Health Maintenance Organizations.



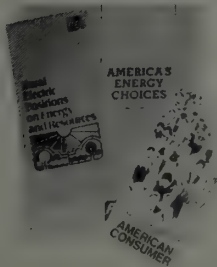
Flint Electric Membership Corporation, Reynolds, Ga., has grown from just over 2,800 members in 1944 to more than 30,000 in 1976. Meter readers use an electric car (dressed up for the bicentennial) to get to some of the homes, farms and businesses in the 15 counties where the cooperative serves.

So far in this country we've taken only small steps toward a real program of energy conservation.

Efficient use and management of all forms of energy are now imperative. Public awareness of this need must be greatly increased. People's consumption patterns will have to be altered; industry must make changes, and government policies to encourage and require wiser use must be implemented.

Conservation does not mean austerity nor a lower standard of living. On the other hand, without it as part of a comprehensive energy policy, energy shortages could in the long run severely restrict the opportunities and advantages we now enjoy, and limit our ability to pursue our traditional hopes and dreams for a better life.

America's rural electric systems



The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is the service organization for the nation's electric cooperatives. Write "Viewpoints," NRECA, 2000 Florida Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 for further information on rural electric energy positions.



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capitalist equation to two columns of numbers.

"They would give me this or that," he said. "Not anything particularly important, you understand; enough for a title and a way into the Council on Foreign Relations. But it would cost me money to take the goddamn job, and I'd be subject to the conflict-of-interest regulations."

He resented the obligation to sign the papers. He understood that the people who presided over the slaughterhouse don't like to get too much blood on their clothes, but he thought it unfair of them to force the same hypocrisy on the hired help. I reminded him that he could take his files and write a book, that the people who work in the public sector sometimes can return to the private sector with their market value much improved. Having looked into the abyss into which it is given few men to look, their impressions, no matter how dishonest or indistinct, acquire the romance of travelers' tales. Their advice and counsel make them welcome to corporate boards of directors, and their remembrances of things past sometimes command large sums in the publishing markets.

"I don't know Carter," he said, "and with these people it won't be as easy as it was with Kennedy and Nixon. They don't give anything away."

On reviewing his connections to other points in the administration he found himself acquainted with several prominent Senators for whom he had performed services useful enough to be remembered. He also knew at least four members of the new Cabinet. From each of these people he could expect favorable attentions. He could assume that they would answer his telephone calls, that they would listen to his opinion on matters of patronage, and that they would find time for appointments with whomever R. chose to endow with the appropriate credentials. Already he had received a number of inquiries, all of them discreet, from people who wanted to know if he could arrange a meeting with one of the new Secretaries. Did he know anybody who could modify the language of the trade bill? What would he think reasonable as an annual fee?

"If I'm not greedy," he said, "I figure I can make \$250,000 in the first year."

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Addition and subtraction

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**L**ISTENING TO R. practice his anxious arithmetic, I understood that he was speaking to me as the true apologist of a republic that had managed to celebrate its Bicentennial year because it had

found ways of buying off the opposition and, by so doing, of preserving the uneven balance between the possessed and the dispossessed. It occurred to me that creativity too often is defined along narrow and provincial lines, as if it were something associated only with the authors of first novels or with well-meaning ladies in Westport, Connecticut, making Mexican jewelry. The use of money releases enormous energies, as does the raising of houses or families and the writing of law. All creativity implies change and therefore damage. "War is the maker of all things," said Heraclitus, thus stating the premise of capitalism. Not only do the combatants come forward with technological advances, but the statesmen who find themselves proprietors of opposing armies come to be regarded (most fondly by people who live after them and so escape their conscriptions) as heroic figures. Heroes trade at extremely high prices, both in blood and money, but they provide the models of behavior for subsequent generations of schoolboys. The three men generally admired as the greatest of American Presidents—Washington, Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt—also presided over America's most necessary wars.

I make these observations not so much to extol the virtues of capitalism as to understand the contradictory motions of its interlocking parts. If the morality inherent in money governs the workings of a commercial nation, then the stability of that nation depends upon a balance between the confusions of money and the clarity of mind. The confusion makes itself most plainly visible among people who believe in the omnipotence of money and who therefore lose the capacity to think. I suspect this is what happened to Richard Nixon. He had become so stupefied by the aura of money that he couldn't destroy the tapes of his White House conversations, probably because he thought that they might represent, if properly edited and advertised, another \$1 million. Although I feel sympathy for the man distracted by the promise of money, I become depressed or uneasy if required to stay long in his presence. The feeling has nothing to do with moral precepts. In the greenhouse atmosphere of inanimate wealth, my mind begins to sag with the heaviness of sleep. It isn't a matter of place. The arrangement of horses and lawns, or the Impressionist view of the summer sea, doesn't necessarily preclude the hope of consciousness. Neither is it a lack of cunning or connections. Somebody always knows somebody who owns something, whether a football team, a corporation, or an island in the Bahamas. The befuddlement of the rich follows from their single-minded staring into mirrors.





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neath the surfaces of their talk I sometimes hear, as if from an ominous distance, something akin to a thin and paranoid music, a sound like the rattling of bones or the voice of the shah of Iran explaining to a newspaper correspondent his reasons for having bought weapons worth \$15 billion in the past four years. "The defense of Iran," said the shah, "is above even history and time. The arms I choose. All systems I choose." Or it is a sound like the rustling of leaves across stone courtyards, the whispering advice of McGeorge Bundy saying to President John Kennedy that the United States might do well to assassinate Fidel Castro. Or it is the testimony of Charles Francis Adams, who, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, spent twenty years in the railroad business, finding and losing fortunes. In the heyday of American capitalism he had known the great men of the period (Gould, Morgan, Hill, and their confederates), and he regretted having made their acquaintance. "Not one that I have ever known," he said, "would I care to meet again, whether in this world or the next; nor is one associated in my mind with humor, thought, or refinement." The times change, and so does the line of goods, but the vacuity remains.

The dehumanizing effects of capitalism become more vicious as they become separated from the exuberance of the dreaming mind. The builders of the American railroads presumably had a vision of a continent drawn together by lines more palpable than those found on any of the known maps. The contemporary evidence suggests that their descendants no longer have the energy to conceive of anything but their own safety. Their crimes have a shallow and diminished aspect, as if it was all they could do to steal a few thousand dollars from the corners of a bureaucracy. Like the ministers of the Ford Foundation, they seem to dwindle into the personae of courtiers, shuffling clerks, doing whatever anyone asks them to do in exchange for the prerogatives of office. What impressed me about the Watergate scandal was the pettiness of it. In the staid conference rooms of the so-called Establishment these days, whether in the universities, the banks, or the departments of government, I have the uneasy feeling that it is the money which owns and uses the people rather than the people who use and own the money.

**T**HROUGH THE LONG CHAINS of political and economic causation, whether it is a matter of kings levying taxes for their murdering crusades or Senators Hubert Humphrey and Howard Baker timidly

accepting gratuities from the Gulf Oil Corporation, the strand of the profit motive weaves itself into the thread of human destiny as inextricably as molecules of DNA. If it is possible for Harold Geneen to earn \$750,000 a year as president of ITT, or for the *New York Times* to pay \$500,000 for the syndication rights to Richard Nixon's memoirs, and then resell those rights for a reported \$1.25 million, then it must be required of somebody else to eat dog food in a Brooklyn slum. We are all of us caught up in the same net of circumstances from which only the more inventive impulse of the capitalist genius can rescue us. This is an unfortunate and no doubt primitive state of affairs, and I wish that it were not so, but I don't know how to avoid the recognition of it. The moralists in the press who mumble about the quasireligious foundations of a free society remind me of the spokesmen for the business interests who believe that their products appear in the retail stores as if by virgin birth. They forget that if people take seriously the guarantee of their inalienable rights they have no choice but to fight for the truths they hold to be self-evident. Like the totalitarian or religious systems of thought, they would have me believe that the slaughter doesn't exist, that people somehow conduct themselves according to the movements of stars or political abstraction. Their hypocrisy obscures the dynamic as well as the tragedy of the capitalist paradox. The best that can be done is to ameliorate the slaughter, but this is difficult to do if the scribes and the pharisees insist that capitalism brings nothing but gladness to the hearts of the people obliged to obey its rules.

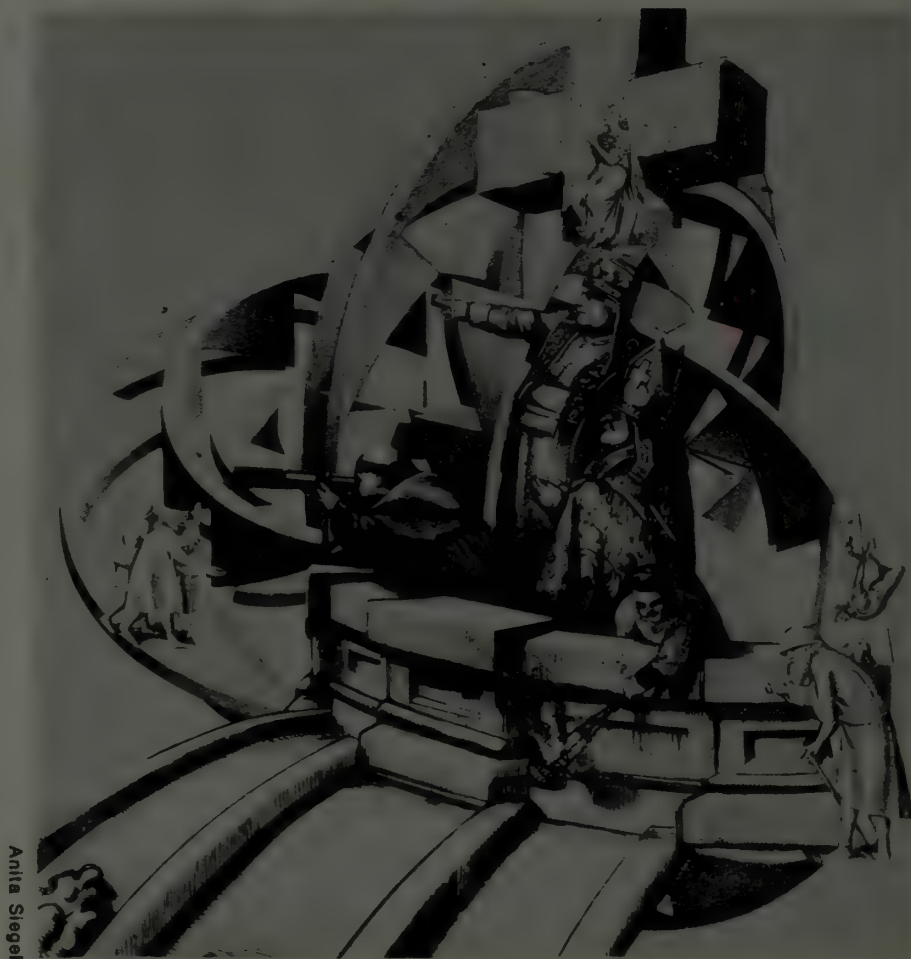
Over a long enough period of time, possibly through the slow evolution of the next eight or nine generations, people might think of a way to relieve themselves of the burden of money. They might learn to exchange property as lightly as they exchange remarks about the nuclear holocaust, and their inherent worth might come to be traded in a market of good intentions. But for the time being I don't see how the paradox can be resolved. The attempts to break it by force or subversion, either because it has become embarrassing to the fastidious ministers of the state or because it does not lend itself easily to the language of ideological doctrine, seem to me comparable to the building of guillotines. The failure to maintain even an imperfect balance between the rich and the poor allows for only two possibilities. Given the institutional bias of American society, I expect that the weight would fall on the side of sanctimonious tyranny rather than toward a renewal of the revolution of 1776. ■■■

**"The lesser excitement of money becomes clear in the perspective of time. Who can remember last year's tycoon?"**



HARPER'S  
MARCH 1977





Anita Siegel

# I ROMAN ORDINARY

**H**IS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI is an ordinary saint. All day long he does what he has to do, and at night he dances.

First thing in the morning, after meditation and mass, he has a little orange juice and a sweet roll with butter. Some days coffee. Some not. It depends on what Romagnoli brings. And then His Holiness goes to the toilet, but not very much. Afterward, he makes his bed.

Then it's business, business, business without a letup. Cardinals are in and out all day: Vatican finances, the pill, a paternity suit against some bishop. Cardinals Bagnio and Konig present in outline their report on Opus Dei, a suspect lay order in Spain; it turns out that Opus Dei is allied with the right wing of the Curia, and it turns out, too, that its in-

fluence in Spain, and even in Italy, is benign. Not only tolerable, but benign. *Floreat Opus Dei*. A decision must be made on the secret archives of the Vatican Library. And what about that Benedictine nun who said mass in Chicago? Is His Holiness thinking of—how can we put it—retirement? Perhaps when he is eighty? No? Pilgrims are lined up and waiting for the papal blessing, a sea of believers awash in their saris and doubleknit and platform shoes. So much ugliness and hope. Did Christ have all of this in mind? The thought flickers for a second through the papal consciousness, but His Holiness extinguishes it with the single bat of an eyelash. He smiles distantly. He speaks a few words of welcome in German, in French, in Greek, in English. A cardinal whispers to him an

John L'Heureux, the author most recently of *Family Affairs* and *Jessica Fair*, teaches English at Stanford.



en he welcomes the Indians and the Slavs. People dear to our heart. All one in the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Some man fool snaps a picture even though cameras are forbidden. After a while they all let His Holiness go, and he trails his long white robes behind him to the papal apartment. Time for a lie-down.

The papal apartment consists of a sitting room, a bedroom, and a bath. The sitting room has four little chairs, designed to be comfortable, and a big desk where His Holiness sits during private audiences; lots of faded tapestries cover the walls. The bedroom is huge, with a glistening parquet floor and almost no furniture. A wooden bed of no special design stands over near the windows; at the head there is a small armoire which holds the pope's robes, and next to that a bureau for his socks and underwear and hankies. On the opposite wall stands the great armoire to which Pope Paul VI alone has the key.

His Holiness lies down on the narrow bed, but the quiet doesn't last long. That little priest Romagnoli is banging around in the sitting room, laying out the tea. Cold tongue of lamb, three caramels, a piping cup of constant Comment. His Holiness bolts the lamb tongue because he is always famished in the afternoon. Then he sits back and tucks a caramel into the side of his jaw and sucks at it with tea. This is his private time, with the shoes kicked off and the old feet up, just enjoying the caramels and tea. Life is good. When he was younger, he used to meditate on the transitoriness of all things mortal during this tea-time, but now that he is in his late seventies, it makes his mind a blank. Nothing. Nothing happening.

His fifteen minutes are up now and the little priestly-poo is chapping at the door, ostensibly to take away the tray, but really to edge His Holiness into the next round of duties.

Delegations are waiting from Russia, from Jerusalem, from Houston. The mistress of a South American dictator demands, for the twentieth time, a private interview. Cardinal Wright is waiting to talk about Joan of Arc and about election procedures for choosing the next pope. A monsignor from *L'Osservatore Romano* is owed a private word because of his ringing defense of the personal lives of the two curial members—kinky, both of them; and perhaps after the private word, His Holiness could pose for a quick photograph? Investments in obsolescent housing must be liquidated, now, while prices are still adequate. A bishop is waiting, a cardinal has a special report, three monsignori have brought money and dollars. Can Henry Ford remarry? Can

President Ford? His Holiness attends to all these matters, his frail yellow hands pressed hard against the white breviary he carries everywhere, his mind only occasionally wandering to the night and to the great armoire in his bedroom.

Finally the work is done and he is free. He goes to his private chapel and prays, sometimes for only twenty minutes, sometimes for an hour. He goes out of himself during this time, looking back wistfully at his own kneeling figure, or looking down from the Stations of the Cross high on the gilded wall, or—more and more lately—looking off to nothing, nothing at all.

Dinner is laid in the papal sitting room: a large bowl of granola, an apple or an orange or some exotic fruit in season, a single glass of wine. It is ten o'clock by now and Rome is beginning to come alive. His Holiness toasts the city and its twenty layers of civilization, roof built upon ruined roof, bone upon bone.

Everything is in the process of decay. While the number of Catholics has continued to increase, the number of priests has dropped: last year from 344,342 to 339,635. The Vatican deficit is about \$6.4 million. The Americans don't give a damn. What to do? His Holiness shakes his head slowly, wisely, from side to side. Again he raises his glass to Rome, to the Via Veneto with its Ferraris and movie stars and Anita Ekberg, and beneath it all to the catacombs with their still unexplored chambers of whitened bones.

**A**FTER DINNER it is canasta time, or blackjack, or honeymoon bridge, whichever Romagnoli prefers. Monsignori, bishops, cardinals, indeed all ecclesiastical Rome dreams of some day playing canasta with His Holiness, but those dreams will never be realized. His Holiness plays only with Romagnoli, the young priest who brings his meals and tidies up around the place. A Sicilian, hot-tempered, Romagnoli plays to win and usually does.

At eleven that Dominican, private confessor to the pope, appears at the door; at eleven-thirty, his soul washed clean, His Holiness takes to his bath so that by twelve he will be fully prepared.

His Holiness Pope Paul VI stands before his bathroom mirror examining his face. Some insane historical accident is responsible for what he sees, because from that mirror there stare back at him the hate-filled eyes of Adolf Eichmann. The nose is the same, the chin, the brows. He smiles to alter the expression, but the eyes remain hard and unseeing

**"His eyes have taken on a distant look, as if he sees beyond this room and these bones he honors with his dancing."**



as blue stone. They could be brothers, he and Eichmann, they could be twins. He shakes his head, he must not think of it, God's little joke on him.

It is a few minutes to twelve now and almost time. His Holiness puts on his pajamas of some rough cloth, immaculately white. The trousers balloon out shapelessly, but they are tied at the ankles with thin brown ribbons. The top slips over his head and is gathered at the waist by a brown sash. The sleeves are wide and loose. His white slippers turn up at the toe like a medieval jester's. He is almost ready. He goes quickly to the small bureau near the head of the bed and, reaching far back into the top drawer, he withdraws a large square of white cloth embroidered with brown. In the center of the cloth there is a circle of leather which will protect his skull from the knife blade. He folds the cloth carefully and then places it on his head, the circle of leather directly on the crown. He tucks the folds of cloth back from his face, arranging it like an Arab burnoose, and then binds the headdress firmly into position with a brown silk circlet. In the mirror he adjusts the silk cord across his forehead and smooths out any wrinkles in the cloth. Is this some sort of Jewish rite? Is this some compromise with Muhammad? The embroidery along the edge of the white cloth could tell us something, surely, but we cannot examine it closely enough because there is no time.

The bells of Rome have begun to proclaim midnight. While they toll on and on, His Holiness walks to the great armoire and turns the little key smoothly in the lock. The carved double doors swing open.

His Holiness genuflects and then stands with his palms together in the attitude of prayer. But he is not praying. He is marveling yet again at his wonderful bones.

The armoire before which he stands contains a tier of thirteen shelves, each of which, at the mere touch of the papal finger, slides out to provide ready access to its treasures. Pope Paul VI presses one of the lower shelves where his large bones lie on a ground of purple silk; gently, soundlessly, it moves toward him until it touches his folded hands, and then it stops. Spread out there before him in perfect order are his femur, his tibia, his fibula. Next to them lie clavicle, humerus, radius, ulna; in the shelf above, the metacarpal and the phalanges. Light from the ceiling casts a violet shadow on the bones and they glow almost with a life, with a soul, of their own. He presses gently on the shelf above this one and out slides a display of his corpus, his tarsi, his patellae. And then the special shelf,

the one with his skull intact, the bones very nearly articulate. His Holiness runs his fingers lightly over the forehead, and his pale hand tingles. The eye sockets are smooth round holes, yellowing at the edges; he pokes his thumb into that strange Eichmann aperture, no eye there, no vile jelly left. The pope catches his breath. This is how it will be, later when at last he lies dead: his bones will wait in some dark vault for something, for anything. And yet they lie here now, put away out of sight, out of use, while he goes on each day living the life of an ordinary saint. His breath comes quicker, lighter. He presses the shelf above, and the shelf above that, and then rapidly, one after another, all the shelves but the top one, each with its cargo of white and glistening bones. *His bones.*

The double doors stand open, the shelves of the armoire expose their treasure to the empty room and to the pope, who has begun to back away. Facing the huge armoire, he bows deeply and then, thumb and middle finger pressed together, he raises his arms out from his sides until he stands cruciform. Is it a flamenco dance? He extends one leg to the side and brings it forward suddenly in a kind of crouch, spins on his forward foot in a sweeping circle, and then repeats the motion with his other leg. No, it is not flamenco. He is dancing slowly, ritually, like a harem dancer, like some small Persian boy trained to do this and this alone. His headdress flutters behind him and the full sleeves flow and dip to the fluid motions of his arms. He is losing himself, his eyes have taken on a distant look, as if he sees beyond this room and these bones he honors with his dancing.

Now the pope approaches the armoire in a formal hesitation step. He bows low for several measures and then he presses the topmost shelf which slides toward him bearing the long curved sword with which he must dance. Tenderly he lifts the sword in his two hands and holds it up, like a presentation, before the armoire. And then he moves to the other side of the room and makes his presentation and then to the next and the next. In the center of the room he stops. His head is bowed. He summons his considerable powers of concentration and then, decisively, he places the sword squarely on the crown of his head, the curved blade poised on the circular leather patch, the tip hanging to the left side of his head, the handle to the right. He adjusts the sword for balance, but it continues to teeter. A fraction of an inch to the left and then it rests motionless. His Holiness takes a tentative step or two. Perfect. The blade whispers against the leather but remains in balance.



His Holiness is smiling as his body moves out the room. The small feet glide soundlessly on the parquet floor. The muscles in his back and belly ripple like water. As his frail torso lurches forward and back, his buttocks respond and his thighs follow through. He dances slowly and with grace. In their poised shelves, his bones are radiant. He dances on and on, though the bells of Rome have struck one o'clock and then two. It seems he must stop now, surely he must, he has danced so long. But he continues.

And now he kneels, the blade on his head tapping from right to left. Slowly, so slowly you can feel the blood pulsing in his thigh and temple, slowly he sits back upon his heels. He slides somehow to his hip and then his buttock until, incredibly, he is lying on the floor at full length, but with his head erect and the sword in calm and easy balance across his crown. Ecstatically, all the muscles of his body ripple, for he has completed this impossible thing. On their shelves his bones clatter. It is done.

With a sudden twist of his entire body, His Holiness is on his feet once more, free now of the most exacting part of his dance; the rest is sheer jubilation. He dances gladly, arms swinging out and away from his body, legs twining and untwining as he moves in arcs and arabesques undreamed of. On and on he dances, though the minutes slip by, though the clocks strike again and again. His flesh ripples and flows. The garments that surround his flesh seem to float free of it. There is nothing beneath those garments but water or air. No flesh is there, surely.

Pope Paul VI's bones have rested in the choir for how long now, attended nightly by this ritual dance. And now the flesh is gone well. Yet His Holiness dances on, his eyes glazed and all-seeing, his body and bones reduced to pure spirit.

Later, unfleshed, His Holiness will kneel at the window to watch dawn break and later still he will crawl to bed for an exhausted hour of sleep before the rest of his world awakes and Romagnoli comes to announce time for meditation and mass. He will take up again his make-believe life of interviews and reports and decisions, pretending. But now it is the dance that matters.

The dance winds on faster and faster and the sword too moves with an independent life. His Holiness twists endlessly clockwise and the sword, its curved silver blade glimmering in the light of the bones, twists counterclockwise, faster and faster as His Holiness Pope Paul VI, that ordinary saint, dances out of his flesh and bones, and dances and dances. ||||





## II SUCCESS

### The view from out there

**A**FTER WATCHING Sammy Davis, Jr., on Merv Griffin and then on Mike Douglas and then on *Sammy and Company*—all in the same week—a few of us here in town decided something had to be done. Sammy gives his all. Whenever he sings or dances or imitates, he just gives his all. Sammy is killing himself for the TV audience.

So we got together and subscribed for a vacation for Sammy. We sincerely felt he had to get away. He could not go on giving his all or else he wouldn't have any left.

We knew from the papers that for his last hospital stay he had to give up \$340,000 in contracts, so we thought our subscription would be only a symbolic sort of gesture—just enough for him and Altovise to get away for a couple weeks to a camp on the lake and just relax. We knew that would be all right because, with Sammy, it isn't the money. Sammy isn't that kind. Generosity is his major fault. That's why whenever he sees a crowd, he's got to entertain it. They can be just hanging around in a bar, just sort of drinking away their troubles, and Sammy will stride to the microphone and sing his heart out till they're all screaming and clapping and jumping around. The candy man *can*.

So we wrote him a letter about our plan. Sammy himself was very appreciative of the idea of getting away from it all. He was very appreciative of our subscription. He sent us a letter and a signed photograph and told us to use the money for our favorite charity. He couldn't stop, he said. He said he wouldn't stop—ever. It was all for people like us.

### The road to success

**S**AMMY DAVIS, JR., was born into a theatrical family in Harlem in 1925. He was on stage before he was three, made a film at age four (*Rufus Jones for President*), and traveled with his uncle's vaudeville act until he was eleven. In 1936 he gave up vaudeville and did a dancing act





th his uncle and his father as the Will Mastin Trio. They were not very successful. Sammy Davis, Jr., was drafted in 1943 and when he came out of the army he began singing and doing imitations, which gave the trio something to do besides just dancing. For a long time nothing happened. Then Frank Sinatra put them a spot on his bill at the Capitol. Nothing happened. Then they played second billing to Janis Paige at Ciro's and the rest is show-biz history.

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### Love and marriage

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**A**FTER THAT NIGHT at Ciro's, every day for three years I had a new chick." That, of course, left little opportunity for meaningful relationships, because 1,095 chicks take up your time and energy.

But then along came Kim Novak, lucky 1956. Kim Novak was a Hollywood star with very blond hair and broad shoulders. And she was very white. Sammy and Kim wanted to marry, but racists kept them apart. And then there was Loray White, whom Sammy did marry, but it was not an ideal marriage even at the beginning. She was black on the right, but the problem was that she and Sammy didn't like one another.

And then there was Mai Britt, the Swedish Hollywood star who had smaller shoulders than Kim Novak but who was just as blond and just as white. Racists tried to keep Mai and Sammy apart, but true love prevailed. "Are you planning on children?" some smart-ale reporter asked. "What about the color problem?" "I don't care if they're polka-dot," Sammy said. This was an ideal marriage for a few years, and then after a while it wasn't. Sammy and Mai had children, two of them, but neither was polka-dot.

And then there is Altovise, "my old woman," "gas." "There is nothing more beautiful than the true love of a true woman, and you better believe it, baby." This is an ideal marriage.

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### Success

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**I**N 1951 JANIS PAIGE opened at Ciro's in Hollywood, with the Will Mastin Trio in second billing. Poor Janis Paige. Everybody in Hollywood fought to get her, and when they did get in they liked Sammy Davis, Jr., a whole lot better than Janis Paige. Sammy was a success, but Janis did not mind so much because she had already

been one for a long time. At least that's what she said.

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### Tragedy and triumph

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**A**FTER HIS CIRO'S OPENING, whenever he was not occupied with singing or dancing or entertaining one of his 1,095 chicks, Sammy Davis, Jr., spent all his money and, as he admits, he became insincere. It affected his voice.

Then in 1954, while driving one of his cars, he struck another car that was coming out of a blind drive. Nobody was hurt except Sammy, who got hit in the face with his own steering wheel. A doctor took out his left eye and gave him a very fine glass one that swivels.

The accident proved, however, to be one of those mysterious acts of God, because Sammy spent several days in darkness thinking about his insincerity, and when he was let loose in the light again, he converted to Judaism and got his voice back better than ever.

Out of tragedy, triumph.

Sammy says, "The difference is that the Christian religion preaches love thy neighbor and the Jewish religion preaches justice. I think justice is the big thing we need."

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### Holding on to success

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**S**AMMY DAVIS, JR., is most at home in Vegas. He has a contract with the Sands for the next five years, some say for the next twenty years. He earns \$100,000 a week, some say more. Five weeks a year, half a million, very nice. But of course there are taxes. And then his agent, his secretaries, his valet, his conductor-arranger, his orchestra, his office manager, his fan mail people, his family. It adds up. He's fifty-one or so. And he can't stop singing and dancing or what will happen to all these people he supports?

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### Filming—live!—at the Sands

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**P**AN IN FROM the top to a full angle shot of the audience. Catch the smiles, the anticipation. Everybody's prepared for the time of their lives. Camera now on curtain as # 10 red spot plays at center. Voice over: "And now ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Sammy Davis, Jr." Sweep audience for full minute applause. Then long shot of Sammy doing his thing. Mr. Talent. Mr. Show Biz.

**"This is not chopped liver, this is everybody's favorite superstar, Mr. Entertainment, and the audience has got to dig the message. Fear and pity, man, this is it."**



He'll open with "Candy Man"; close-up on rings (right hand) then move to *right* profile of face. After first verse, when he starts dancing, full shot then close-up on feet, pulling gradually away to include legs. Get the cock in. They go crazy for a cock shot, and it can easily be cropped if the show hits the tube during family time. When he starts to sing again, close-up. Get the face, milk chocolate and just beginning to sweat. He's really working. Get the teeth in that Sammy Davis, Jr., smile.

See instruction sheet for rest of show.

He'll close with either "I Did It My Way" or "I've Got to Be Me." Again follow instructions as per above. Special attention, however, is called to final close-ups. Camera *must* be angled to the right to avoid picking up glare from the glass eye. Very important also to catch strain on his face. He makes it look easy, even though you know it's killing him. He's sweating like a bastard now. *Get it.*

Again and finally, this is not chopped liver, this is everybody's favorite superstar, Mr. Entertainment, and the audience has got to dig the message. Fear and pity, man, this is it.

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### The meaning of success

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**W**HAT IS IT that you want? Why do you keep entertaining this way?"

Sammy is lying on the couch in his dressing room, a victim of exhaustion. He has given too much.

"All I want is they should like me—say this is a nice guy. Just let them give me one thing—applause—and I'm happy."

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### Testimonials

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**G**ROUCHO MARX: "This guy is better than Al Jolson. Jolson could only sing."

Frank Sinatra: "A gasser. You bet your bird."

Muhammad Ali: "Next to me, Sammy's the greatest."

President Nixon: "A fine entertainer and a fine American."

Dave Landfield, secretary: "Bob Sylvester once said that Sammy looks like he got hit in the face with a shovel. But let me tell you, he's beautiful, man. Beautiful. You'd better believe it."

Murphy, valet: "If Sammy dies, I'll just have to go with him."

Totie Fields: "Listen, this man . . . let me

tell you . . . this man, Sammy Davis, Jr., is so honest . . . what? . . . listen! . . . Sammy is so beautiful . . . he's the most generous . . . you don't know what he gives to charity in secret . . . the people he helps . . . he's so . . . let me just finish this. You see how big I am? Well, Sammy's got a heart as big as me. That's the truth . . . this guy is *big* . . . they don't call him Mr. Entertainment for nothing."

Milton Berle: "Sammy Davis, Jr., is the greatest entertainer in the world."

Sammy Davis, Jr.: "Can you dig it, baby?"

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### Theory and craft of performance

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**Y**OU HAVE TO BE honest with an audience. You got to have antennae and feel what they want. The patter between songs is something nobody can plan. It has to happen. If you're going to be honest, you can't write it out and learn it ahead of time. What I do is successful because I am trying to be honest."

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### The view from out there

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**T**HE OTHER NIGHT on *Sammy and Company* they played a trick on him that really shows the kind of man he is.

It was a usual spectacular show with all of Sammy's superstar friends just sitting around and talking like anybody else, and then, right before Sammy sang his last number, they played this trick. You know how Sammy always wishes Peace, Love, and Togetherness for everybody? Well, what happened is that George Rose—Sammy's orchestra leader—took some time off to tell everybody that you can get a Sammy Davis, Jr., T-shirt with "Peace, Love, and Togetherness" written on it by just writing to:

Sammy Davis, Jr., International Fan Club  
P.O. Box 510  
Beverly Hills, California 90213

They'll send you a T-shirt—small, medium, large—and all the other fan goodies in one packet.

The trick was that Sammy didn't know a thing about it! They just surprised him with it, right on the TV.

Sammy was embarrassed as anything, and he just shook his head and said, "I'm gonna get Eric. I'll get you for this. I'm gonna get you." And he pretended he was serious, but of course he was only joking.

Peace, Love, and Togetherness: that's the real meaning of Sammy Davis, Jr.



PART OF MY LIFE  
IN LATE AUGUST 1975  
IN THE LITERAL  
RIVER OF WORDS

by Tom Lewis

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For one part of my life in late August 1975, night and day, I lay on my back on the brown rocky bottom of the literal river of words flowing over me, not knowing where to begin or where to end, on the round rocky bottom of the clear Bearcamp River, the light debris of late August low water tumbling fast past me. Larval shells, leaves, twigs, live and dead insects. The spot is located on the Chocorua Quadrangle, a USGS topo map of east-central New Hampshire. I lay in deep water at a bend maybe 100 yards below the iron bridge at South Tamworth, not far below the old Bemis Schoolhouse, where we were living that month, and not far below a ruined sawmill with a dry race.

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I snagged flies on rusted iron and steel parts under water, the same color as the rounded glacial rocks littering the underlying ledges of hard pockmarked green-black Ossipee basalt or whatever it was over which the shallow water ran like fast ice in the terrible sunlight.

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I lay in the literal river of words unable to choose words or a course of action, confused between prose and poetry, fact and fiction, truth and lies. One truth, many lies swept by me. I lay in the water and wept.

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I am not dead. I am not exactly like a trout. My problems will not solve themselves, nor can I solve them in isolation. I will rise, not a trout, in my chest waders, wringing wet with sweat under the rubber in the hot sun, my faded blue-white denim shirt clinging to my cooling flesh, my old white sneakers on over the rubber stocking feet of the olive drab waders, my dark sunglasses held by an elastic strap

across the back, my uniform for going to the river drying on me in the sun. I cast out over the water, keeping my backcast out of the bushes. I cast eagerly out over the running water to where I lie watching, waiting, hungry for the tiny flies breaking the mirror. I lie in the current, I wade in the river.

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I live studiously in the water of words. I strike the bug on the water. I bite sharp death. I am lifted gently out of the water, held in a soft net. Wet hands hold me, work the hook free, drop me into a dark creel where I lie out of water gasping for air and I die. I barely remember the silver-blue glass shattering around me as I passed quickly from water to fiery air. I smile. I sit on a large rock at the edge of the river and open a cold can of beer. I drink. I kill the shining trout and cut open its belly to see what it has been eating this afternoon. I tie on a new fly and cast sharply, skillfully, carefully out over the water to the spot where I lie patiently waiting to eat painful sudden death. Fear of food, fear of water, fear of clear flowing words.

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The day blues and darkens. In shadows, in the cooling water, I swim into my fears, into the shallows, and search for food. I leave the river and go slowly home. I see friends in their small garden. We talk and drink beer on their front steps. What have I done? I ask myself. I have made an end and a beginning. I laugh with my children and wife, cook rice, fry fish in hot oil, eat my supper with Madeline, Nicholas, and Jennifer. I read a novel, feel happy for awhile, listen to music on the radio, go to bed and hear the river running, make love with Madeline for a long time and fall asleep. And in deep dreams, I lie under literal rivers of water, dead, my red belly open to the stars above the living watery mirror, color in darkness, red mouth of long stories, certain universal histories flowing fast over me, my life singing downstream where the Bearcamp runs hard and cold into the Saco, then into the sea.



# VISIONS OF FUTURES PAST



by Sally Helgesen

**I**T IS SAID THAT a prophet often lives without honor in his own land, that thinkers bent on schemes for bettering the human condition are doomed to be misunderstood by their less enlightened countrymen. And perhaps it is true, in countries where each is content to cultivate his own garden, to weed and prune and tend his own affairs, that a modesty of aspiration encourages a mistrust of soothsayers and advocates of change. But we live in a land where expectations know no bounds; so, condemning as narrow and selfish the easy task of learning to live sensibly and with least offense to the common weal, we make it our business to decide just what is wrong with everybody else.

In such a climate, where discontent is rife, the prophet will find himself not only honored, but lionized, flattered, published and reprinted, passed around the lecture circuit, and paid for expressing his views, regardless of how many times he may have stated them before. Should he be blessed with a talent for raising funds, a prophet may even establish some kind of official institute where he can watch his every thought pleasingly congeal into dogma, and put his vision to the test. Of

course even if his schemes should prove so hopeless of execution that the initial enterprise fails, he may, if he has properly focused the discontents of his supporters, persuade them to maintain their interest, citing a host of evils which will certainly engulf humanity if they abandon this last valiant effort at beating back the darkness.

**A**MERICA IN THE 1960s saw the rise of many new prophets. William Irwin Thompson was one of them, and if his rise was less spectacular than that of many others, he has at least managed to keep himself aloft in the shiny space through which greater lights have hurtled on their way to obscurity or derision. He began quietly enough as a discontented instructor of humanities at MIT, and gained modest fame with the publication of *At the Edge of History*, a polemic in which the youthful Ph.D. made a case for the cataclysmic "Atlantean" prophecies of Edgar Cayce and Dr. Manson Valentine in opposition to the technological optimism of established futurists, such as Herman Kahn; then he traveled

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The dreamers of Lindisfarne unearth ideas whose time has come and gone



Ernst Aebi

round for a bit, and finally undertook to raise funds for the establishment of the Lindisfarne Association, a delightful retreat on Long Island at which he proposed, as prophets often do, to put his ideas into action.

As prophets go, Thompson is an affable one, not particularly driven or obsessed, certainly not greedy or megalomaniacal like those strange commanders of mass adoration whose followers are always getting kidnapped by their parents. No, Thompson is the standard professional prophet, a comfortable home-grown kind of visionary, a man who picked up at the right time on all those pleasant Sixties things like organic gardening and video-taping and windmills and tents and domes and expanded awareness, a man who believes that intellectuals must get in touch with their bodies, find their way back to nature, cast off the whole ugly grab bag of despicable Western prejudices and predispositions. And then on the heavier, more abstract plane, Thompson is a philosopher who sees the need to do really important stuff, such as abolishing all those fake polarities and dichotomies we've been hung up on since the Greeks, learning to feel "compassion for the sentient

beings in rock and tree," trying to fashion a whole new system of mythology instead of simply trusting the old one to evolve. Thompson has described as his own "favorite image" that of a Ph.D. in philosophy hoisting a pitchfork in the backyard compost heap—yes, the proudling Platonist shoveling shit, wallowing in the dirt from whence he came.

Now, all this sounds really nice, although there may be some who will question if such schemes are really vanguard visions, or just rearguard retentions of ideas whose time has come and gone. But let quibblers quibble, Thompson's particular genius as a prophet has been his success in institutionalizing his harmless, anachronistic vision, in maintaining a community where members are free to pursue their private speculations unencumbered by the demands of the outside world, where futurists, antifuturists, and Humanists with a capital *H* can state their well-known views in a reassuring climate of mutual regard. I was intrigued by Lindisfarne's association with so many of the regulars on the think-tank circuit—E. F. Schumacher, Russell Schweikart, Paolo Soleri, Saul Mendlovitz, Richard Falk, Stewart Brand, Gregory Bateson, David Spangler—



and, although somewhat numbed by Lindisfarne's description of itself as a "hamlet-sized meta-industrial village" constructed on a "neo-Jeffersonian model that can help the country find its true bearings," I decided to find out just what all these people might consider our "true bearings" to be. And so, last August, I made a voyage to Lindisfarne.

### Under their noses

UPON MY ARRIVAL, I found myself wishing that everyone there could be equipped with bladders like those which accompanied the citizens of Laputa wherever they went. You'll recall it required no more than a strong box on the ears or rap in the mouth with one of those pease-filled pouches to rouse to a momentary consideration of reality the speculators and idealists whom Gulliver encountered on his voyage to that isle. At Lindisfarne, so far as I could see, the strain of being so long apart from the outside world had made the inhabitants not dissimilar to those legendary philosophers; indeed, they appeared so enraptured with their private speculations as to be in constant danger of crashing into the nearest wall.

A good supply of bladders might, for instance, have prevented recent expenses arising from the decision by the Lindisfarne community to build a bioshelter as part of its system of "cottage industries," a scheme conceived after the model of fish farming as practiced at New Alchemy Village in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Since the Lindisfarnians, in their concern with effecting a *transformation* of global culture, like to consider themselves new alchemists of a sort; since the idea of producing their own fish fit so well with all their talk about "achieving community self-sufficiency"; and since the project gave occasion for a fine flurry of meetings, proposals, resolutions, and counterresolutions, as well as the printing and mass mailing of an optimistic yellow circular announcing the project to the contributors, members, and friends upon whose donations Lindisfarne's existence depends, the high cost of building the bioshelter was deemed entirely justified. Nobody noticed while the project was in its planning stages that the pine-fringed property where the community lives straddles a tidal swamp from which fish might be farmed naturally. "It really just never occurred to us that it was there," explained Tim O'Shea, president of Lindisfarne. "Our decision seemed appropriate, when suddenly someone said, my God,

why are we doing this, we're living right next to a *marsh*."

Perhaps the community of scholars at Lindisfarne is most profitably compared with the Lagodans, the academic class among the Laputans—*projectors*, as they styled themselves. The Lagodans, immersed in the advancement of purely speculative learning, and dedicated to transforming entirely the scheme of order which prevailed, disregarded trifling inconveniences in their daily lives, and never noticed that the countryside lay in waste while new rules for agriculture were being contrived, or that houses fell into ruin while they designed new construction techniques. The Lindisfarnians, poised on the brink of a culture which William Irwin Thompson has prophesied will soon be swallowed up by "death and the denial of death in greed," seem so committed to a grand-scale transformation of society that they can't be bothered to consider their own record of achievement, or regard such trivialities of daily existence as their own situation upon a marsh.

Its members like to describe Lindisfarne as both a place—a "reality" is how they put it—and a vision. The vision is tied up with a lot of impressive talk about projecting "vital points of light" into the universe; the reality is a somnolent retreat known as Fishcove Center, a rambling old wooden lodge surrounded by a clutch of cabins overlooking the neglected swamp, just outside of Southampton, New York. When I visited, seventeen adults and a few very young children were living there; since then, six members have left to establish a New York City extension with the object of "demonstrating Rural/Urban Interdependence." The members have spent much of their time in the past few years at Fishcove holding frequent meetings, preparing papers on religious and futurological topics, and trying to "achieve community self-sufficiency," an enterprise I could hardly distinguish from simple housekeeping, but which I was assured was far more complex. Gardening and cooking are both done very well here: the fine pumpkin bread is accepted as evidence that the community has gotten itself together, and the only example of "establishing rapport with the community at large" that I saw at the time of my visit was a Sunday brunch offered to the public for a reasonable fee.

Ask anybody at Lindisfarne what goes on there besides a lot of good eating, and you're sure to hear about the cottage industries they're developing. The abortive fish farm was one, another is the children's school, an "integral part of the overall community struc-

"Now we are taking another quantum leap in human culture. . . . The old art of the novel falls behind, for now reality itself becomes the work of art, and the lift-off of a rocket becomes a concert. And so the cycle spins around, as Vico, Marx, and McLuhan knew it would. In primitive communism, art was knowledge; in electronic socialism, it is knowledge itself that becomes the work of art." —Passages About Earth



ure" in which I was told two students were enrolled this fall. And then there's the communications industry, a typesetting machine and printing press that churn out a barrage of newsletters and circulars which do not so much detail the day-to-day activities at Lindisfarne as reiterate the lofty concepts upon which they rest ("The daily rhythm of our community is our practice made visible"), while reworking standard phrases about "global fellowship structures" and "our own interconnectedness," reprinting photos of members' new babies, and relisting the titles and academic credits of everyone involved. The press has recently undertaken to print in paperback the first *Lindisfarne Annual*, a collection of papers presented by Fellows and supporters at the Fishcove conferences. I was assured by the community that the collection is eagerly awaited by the reading public.

I must not neglect mention of the Lindisfarne "tape industry," for a preoccupation with audiovisual equipment, as it used to be called back in school, has often struck me as providing an obverse index to how much other work gets done in a place. At Lindisfarne, the glut of printed material is transferred to tape: each observation made by a prestigious Fellow is stored on a cassette and offered for sale. When I visited Lindisfarne, Bill Thompson introduced me to a harmless-looking young man loafing about the kitchen. "Sally," he said, "I think it's important for you to meet Michael Katz, the guy who heads up our tape center." He handed Katz a manila folder and told him to file it away somewhere. "Michael's a real big shot around here. He's on our board of directors." Michael took the folder and shrugged—"Isn't everybody?" I asked Michael what he did. "I mostly just work around, unless we have visitors." And what did he do before? "I was from around Southampton," he told me, "so I just kind of picked up on his place."

**T**HE READER, IF HE once attended some local Camp Minnehaha, may note a similarity between Lindisfarne's cottage industries and the special projects for which he signed up as a child; and were he to visit Fishcove and learn, as I did, that the rambling lodge and the cabins which surround it actually had been a campsite for family groups, he might wonder how much things had really changed. Of course he would realize that today's campers are employing their talents with schemes for the general improvement of human life, rather than in making plastic lanyards, but the operation might

appear to him to be run on a similar principle, whereby activities are scheduled so fast and furiously that nobody has time to question why he is doing anything. As the vacation stretches on, it may begin to feel more real than what was left behind. "As far as I'm concerned, New York is the alternative lifestyle," remarked Maureen O'Shea, the group's treasurer, when I told her where I was from. "This is what I call real life."

The projectors at Lindisfarne are free to pursue their vision of real life thanks to their incorporation as a private, nonprofit foundation, supported by tax-exempt contributions. Bill Thompson has been chief fund-raiser of

"*Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, like Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, is more of a personal vision than a novel; the voltage pours through the wires and burns up the thin insulation of the literary genre. . . . I was awestruck by the synchronicity of the book with my own life. Here Doris Lessing was writing a book about a professor of humanities who took a journey outside of time, discovered pieces of a lost civilization, and stumbled into the power points of the etheric web around earth. *Briefing* was published in the same month as *At the Edge of History*. We were writing out in different codes a message with the same structure."

—Passages About Earth

course, and it was through the force of his ideas that members, Fellows, and patrons were originally attracted to the place; for who could resist his assertions that Lindisfarne would provide a way out of "the political impasse between bourgeois ideas and Marxist action," would be a point of radiance connecting with the etheric web of light-cast by a civilization only beginning to emerge, would be the spawning ground for—yes!—a *whole new breed of man*? Of course, like other professional thinkers of profound thoughts who have established think tanks and conference centers where they can ponder the future of mankind (the Aspen Institute and the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara come readily to mind), Thompson's livelihood is bound up with his prophecies, which have a fine, gloomy ring to them, enlivened with an appropriate clang of optimism. And so, perhaps owing to the strain he is continually under from having to raise funds, it has become difficult for an outsider to distinguish the exact point where the prophecy ends and the pitch begins, so essential has Lindisfarne's survival become in his philosophical scheme of things.

Thompson's evolution as a prophet, though he is of course a minor one compared to Marshall McLuhan or Buckminster Fuller, will be familiar in outline to followers of the social history of the past decade. While teaching at MIT, Thompson was struck by a vision, an "epiphany" which came on him in the Dublin National Library, in which he saw that it had



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VISIONS  
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been given to him alone to understand the sociological implications of George Moore's mystical thought. By the late Sixties, however, the professor had begun to conceive of himself as a "sterile mule," impotent in his efforts to straddle the famed gap between the "two cultures" he discerned within the institution where he taught. But one day, consequent upon reading a denunciation of the "tired Eastern liberal view of man" by Mike Murphy, the founder of Esalen, the sterile mule felt himself roused. And so he did what Easterners always do when they get worried about anemia and stagnation and things like that: he

"If one twisted his head around in the position recommended by the Mixtec Indian (and some new books) to entertain the view that primitives aren't primitive and that when they say the gods came out of the sky bringing the arts of civilization, we are to take them literally, then the university, which Plato founded, has ended up in Plato's cave. . . . For a person like myself, a cultural historian working within a university, it becomes much simpler to follow Plato and Oviedo and identify the gods with the superior technology as the denizens of the lost continent of Atlantis."

—At the Edge of History

hit the road, made a pilgrimage to California, to L.A., the city he considered to be poised at the very edge of history. He was careful, in the opening chapters of the book in which he recounted his experiences, to name the men he thought were his predecessors in this tradition, Alan Watts, Nathanael West, Thomas Pynchon, all pilgrims who had discerned that in California there would come "the apocalypse and/or the millennium."

Esalen was his first stop. There he found himself deliriously liberated by the "sensuousness of the nude baths," dazzled by the sight of "madmen and hippies" rapping democratically with learned men like himself at the wine bar each evening. Thompson was moved to undertake a pilgrimage to spiritual centers across America. The book he wrote about it, *At the Edge of History*, was an exotic pastiche of autobiography and eschatology and prophecy and intellectual name-dropping, but the book hit a nerve, elicited a response from others who wanted to make changes in their lives and plug into the current of spiritual electricity Thompson claimed was circuiting across the land. In New York, a man named Gene Fairly read in the *New York Times* what seemed to him "the most brilliant, the very best review I had ever seen," in which the reviewer claimed that the book actually provided an "update" of all cyclical historical thought. Fairly had just quit his job as a senior vice-president with the Interpublic group of advertising agencies and begun training as a Zen contemplative. He loved the book and was fascinated by the author, so he paid

him a visit at his new post at York University in Toronto.

"I think Thompson was embarrassed about being there, because he'd written a chapter in his book called 'Walking Out on the University,' and here he was back in," recalls Fairly. The two men spoke about Thompson's scheme for walking out permanently, after gathering around him an elite group of "graduate-school types" with whom he could expand his body and spirit as well as his mind. Such a group would prepare the world for the "new planetary culture" whose emergence he had predicted in his book.

Fairly went back to New York to use his connections to raise money for the project. He says he stirred the interest of Nancy Wilson Ross at the Asia Society; Mrs. Stanley Young, a wealthy woman interested in Zen Buddhism; and Jean and Sidney Lanier, heirs of the poet and funders of the now-defunct Finca La Folenca, a mini-Esalen in Southern France where the Laniers had established themselves as unofficial gurus. Mrs. Lanier is known in fund-seeking circles as a key to the Rockefeller Brothers fund, so that door was opened, and between these groups Fairly says he put together \$150,000 to set things going.

## Many ideas, few students

THIS WAS THE Lindisfarne Association born during the summer of 1973. Fairly claims that while he was out raising funds and drawing up the organizational models that funders like to fool around with so they can convince themselves that their money is actually going somewhere, Thompson was traveling about the globe, gathering material for his next book, *Passages About Earth*. Yet it was Thompson who came up with the amorphous cloud of hyperbole which clothed the organization in appropriately dignified garments; he came up with the "Lindisfarne idea." Like the sixth century Irish monastery from which it took its name, the new organization was to serve as a "repository for the great ideas and sacred texts" of a civilization then in its death throes. In the final chapter of his new book, Thompson made bold to identify the old summer camp as one of several pulsating points of energy spread out across the globe from which the new culture would soon emerge.

Fairly had made less cosmic commitment, hoping instead for a group of perhaps 10 people, eighty students and twenty teacher



iving together in an Asian spirit of asceticism and religious tolerance. But somewhere along the way the magic strands of light got all tangled up with the demands of reality, and in the fall of 1973 Lindisfarne, the vital link between the "hominization of the primates and the planetization of mankind," opened with fewer than a dozen teachers and maybe half that many students.

"I had spent years in business," says Fairly. "I thought we had to concentrate on getting students if we wanted it to work out, but Bill thought it was unattractive to go out huckstering, and said students would seek us out as soon as *Passages About Earth* was published in the spring. Everyone was wondering where the money was going, and we had a lot of trouble talking it up with the funders, convincing them we had some kind of college going. We didn't exactly ship people in from Central Casting, but there's a kind of not lying that involves not really telling the truth, so we used it."

Thompson recalls things differently of course, and says today that only the recession was responsible for turning the "new college or the new culture" into just another conference center where academicians hold forth in pleasant surroundings among like-minded colleagues. "Guys like Dick Falk and Jonas Salk don't speak anywhere," says Fairly. "They don't need a special retreat or separate community where people think they're living for the future."

The idea of living for the future gives a happy advantage to the projectors at Lindisfarne, for when things go askew in the present, when cracks in logic begin to appear, nobody needs to notice or worry about them. On my visit, I fell easily into this fine spirit of things, and when Bill Thompson and I were selected, one glum and sticky Saturday afternoon, to wash the endless rows of windows that encircle the dining room of the lodge, I scarcely noticed that the crumpled copies of the *New York Times* which we were using to wipe away the Windex disintegrated in our hands, forming messy gray flakes which adhered to the windows, and leaving them dirtier than they had been. I accepted the group decree that using newsprint is ecological and saves on paper towels, and occupied myself in an exchange of philosophical generalities with Thompson. He spoke to me of time, space, the search for synthesis, other people's hang-ups, and the inevitability of planetary consciousness, vigorously denouncing specialists of every stripe, dull academicians who fail to appreciate the "interface" between apparent contrarities. From across the marshy channel

the drone of a buzzsaw reminded us where we were.

Unexpectedly, amidst our abstract speculations and fruitless physical exertions, Thompson interjected a personal note.

"So what are your plans," he asked me. "Working in New York for the next twenty-five years, or what?"

Good Lord, I had never really thought of it that way before. How sterile my aspirations sounded phrased thus, how unimaginative, how nearly inconceivable. I wondered what Thompson envisioned for New York in the next twenty-five years.

"Nothing. I mean, it will all be dead, completely dead."

An image formed in my mind, a smoking ruin. Apocalypse?

"No," he paused gravely. "Water, I guess. Total immersion as the sea level rises slowly."

"My God." I gestured out toward the Lindisfarne garden, with its mystical enneagrammic wind harp, toward the log cabins and the swamp and the town beyond. My God. "And Long Island?"

"Geopsychically," Thompson informed me, Lindisfarne is set in a disaster area; all of Long Island is doomed. "It's just not a good futuristic place." My own lack of imagination left me baffled by this piece of information, for I was at a loss to understand just how Lindisfarne might witness the birth of a new culture while submerged beneath the Atlantic, how the old summer camp could absorb vital energy when its geopsychic vibes were so bad. When I asked Thompson what the people at Lindisfarne were doing about this dilemma, he showed no impatience, but said simply that the community had its ways. "For instance, when we meditate, we can project ourselves into the ethereal web. And that's only one strategy."

**N**OW, WERE I OF A cynical cast of mind, I might have questioned how far such an attempt at astral projection had taken Thompson beyond his sterile mule days at MIT, but my exposure to the free-flowing mode of thought which prevails at Lindisfarne had alerted me to the futility of expressing skepticism. I had already been impressed by how the Lindisfarnians, following the method employed by Thompson in his books, often substitute an impressive form of intellectual name-dropping for our more conventional logic, thus rendering obsolete the tiresome necessity for showing connections between ideas. The new way of reasoning uses arbitrary juxtapositions to carry the weight of

"We eliminate the middle to achieve a new energized top and bottom: scientists and hippies, Pythagoreans and superstitious technopeasants. No doubt the new medievalism, like the old, will be both angelic and demonic at once. Short of the hippies' expected return of the gods in their flying saucers, or the Second Coming of Christ, the tragedy of history will continue, and the double-bind condition of human nature will remain."

—At the Edge of History



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the argument: the ideas tossed together must be obscure, however, and leave the reader somewhat baffled, afraid he has missed the connection, and yet impressed by the author's erudition. Leafing through Thompson's *Passages About Earth*, we meet with excellent examples of this method: "If we can articulate David Spangler's work on power points with Lessing, Jung, Whitehead, and modern physics . . ." And again, "Now if we take Edgar Cayce's version of the myth of the fall of man, put it alongside those of C.S. Lewis, A.C. Clarke, and, say, the ancient Mexican myth . . ." On and on it goes, leaving the clever reader to sort his way through the unsorted mass of allusions, and make whatever sense he can from them.

This modern type of reasoning is employed with great facility by Thompson, but it is not of course peculiar to him, having been used to advantage by other great prophets of our era. Many of these, having found themselves at a loss to explain what is happening around them, or confused by the general upheaval, simply catalogue every idea, theory, statement, or allusion that, however remotely, appears to bear on the subject, and then trust that the future will show them clever enough to have mentioned it way back when. The advantage of this is that if enough listings are made *some-*

"As often happens in history, the widest point of one gyre is the beginning point of another; the apex is the beginning of the decline. Media destroy the sacrosanct quality of novel and poem and replace James Joyce and Dylan Thomas with Jean-Luc Godard and Bob Dylan. But the decentralization made possible by the informational revolution also makes concentrations unnecessary. One does not have to pay the heavy price of living in New York just to be close to things. One does not have to be at Berkeley if the campus at Santa Cruz has information-retrieval systems and videophones that permit intercampus consultations."

—At the Edge of History

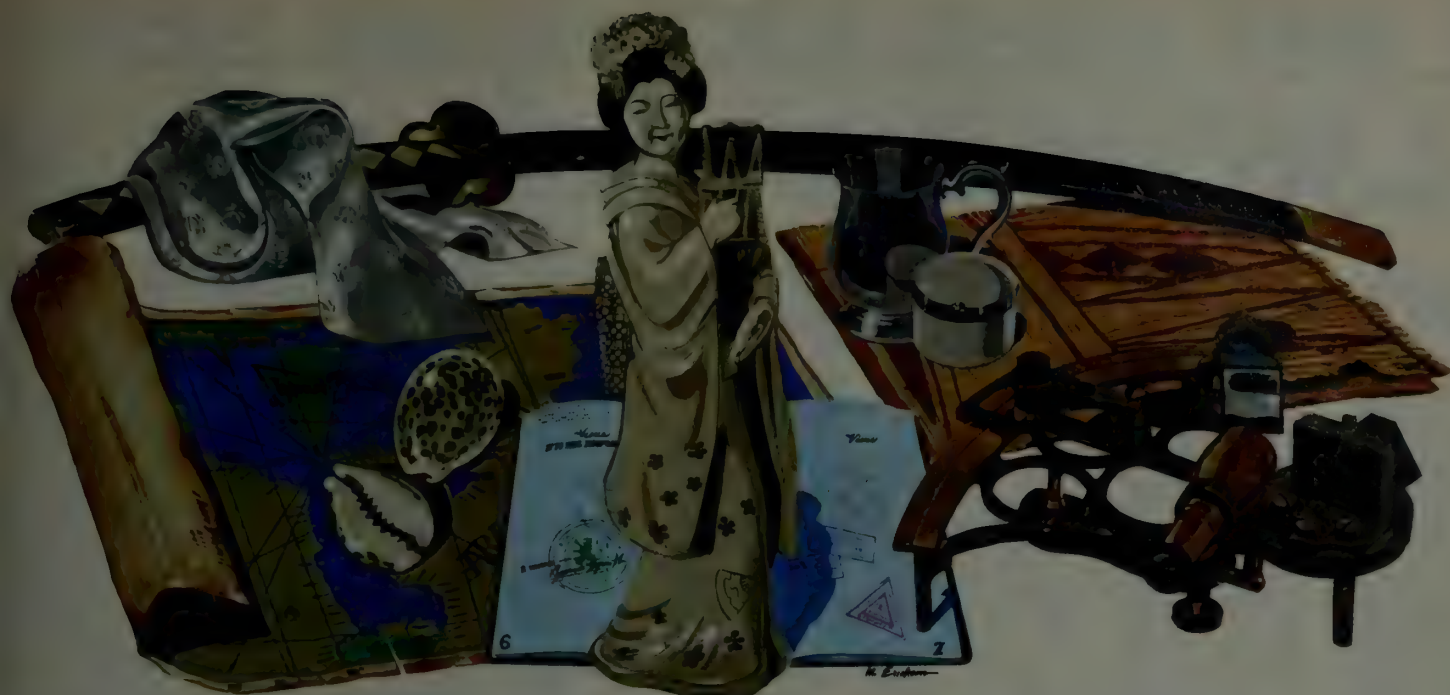
thing will eventually have to fit together with something else, and the writer's reputation as a prophet will be confirmed; meanwhile, the impressive number of allusions will at least prove that the author is widely read. Thus have we watched Norman O. Brown paste his most recent books together with all manner of dots and dashes, elliptical bridges between the great thoughts of human history which leave the reader wishing for a good strong rope with which to hoist himself over the gap between Stephen Dedalus and Daphnis and Chloe. And we have seen the method employed with dazzling self-assurance by Marshall McLuhan, who can perhaps lay claim to being its most masterful practitioner, for he presents us with modern-day *anatomies* in which almost every possible facet of modern life is mentioned, although few explanations are offered, thus leaving the reader holding a big bagful of bones,

rather than the neat figure of a skeleton with which an anatomy sought to present him in the old days. Upon opening *Understanding Media*, perhaps the classic text of this modern kind, the reader is suddenly set upon by a wildly eclectic horde of allusions: cornflakes and Cadillacs, King Lear and General Sarnoff, David Hume and the inevitable Tocqueville, Cardinal Newman and Napoleon, the African Mind and Walt Whitman, Synge, Dagwood, Louis Pasteur, the BBC, Pius XII, Carl Jung—all of them jammed together in the first chapter, just sort of propped up against one another, heedless of the need for any of that sticky, old-fashioned connective tissue that used to leave such a mess.

This choc-a-bloc juxtapositioning characterizes what might be called the potpourri or even—forgive me, but the evidence presses in—the dungheap image of culture, in which the disorderliness of the writer's ideas is set forth as an accurate reflection of the chaos into which society has descended. Rubble and garbage are the favored metaphors, and the reader is urged not to concern himself if what he is reading strikes him at times as being trash, since it is with just such a scramble of scraps and shards that the true design of culture is best imitated. McLuhan urges us all to trot gaily through the "middenheaps of history," while Thompson himself watches calmly as despairing students "trash the campus . . . for in garbage they sense the entropic state of our civilization." In *Edge*, our prophet reminds us that Oedipa Maas's paranoid fantasy in *The Crying of Lot 49* is inspired by a mysterious conspiracy known as WASTE, and in *Passages* he denounces a group of "intellectually primitive" young anthropologists who fail to appreciate the poetic significance of giraffe dung while viewing a film about African hunters, for it is of course in a culture's *droppings* that its real significance can be discerned.

The only ill effect of this method that I can discover has been the generation of great anxiety over problems which might confront the archaeologist of the future, for thinkers who give us their thoughts in shards seem to share a concern that every shard left in society's wake be accurately interpreted. Thus Thompson frets lest Cadillacs and Volkswagens be mistaken for products of two entirely different cultures, while Buckminster Fuller thoughtfully prepares his autobiographical *Chronofile*, a compendium of trivia from the life of a "representative" twentieth-century man. But perhaps this anxiety arises from something which the practitioner of the new kind of logic unconsciously apprehends: that his own writing is disorderly, and confusing to the reader.





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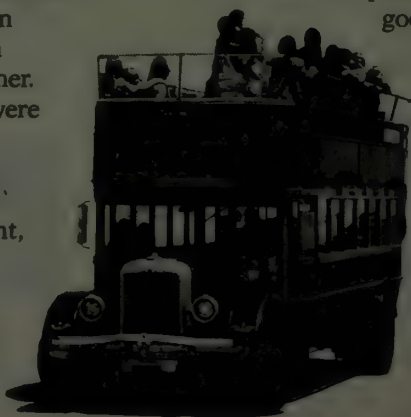
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## Religious mishmash

**A**T LINDISFARNE there is of course a thoughtful concern for the tasks which will challenge future archaeologists, so the community has undertaken to catalogue today's culture in all its busyness, doing so in the same spirit which modern logicians employ in their books—that with great concern for diversity, and little regard for coherence. Bill Thompson proudly led me around the meeting room on the second floor of the old lodge, where Shaker benches perch in prim, upright vigil alongside prayer mats, while gaudy Hindu idols stare impassively at the understated ornaments of Judaism and those austere crosses so much in vogue since the spirit of Vatican II renderedifixes with the hanging figure of Jesus embarrassing to modern taste. “If the world were destroyed tomorrow,” he informed me, “archaeologists could get a pretty good idea of the different religions of the world and their connections just by picking through this ruin. We’ve achieved a pretty good synthesis, I think,” he continued, gesturing toward the cozy library onto which the room opens. “We’re really eclectic. This is the kind of place where Tibetan lamas feel comfortable giving lectures. A lot of us are Irish, you know, and were raised as Catholics, but we do have a number of Jews. Jews usually tend to be Sufists, I’ve found.”

I was at a loss to reconcile this happy notion of cosmopolitanism with the general disquiet at the mention of anything urban at Lindisfarne, where one is constantly assured that the cities are dying, are in fact already dead and only those who live there would realize it. “New York,” Thompson informed me as we sat on the grass in the back garden and listened to the rustle of the wind harp, “New York is like a star in the last stage of disintegration. The brilliance you see now is only the afterglow that flames out before the final explosion, what we call the supernova effect. Our role is to be nearby so we can sift through the pieces and save what we need for the completion of planetary civilization.” It was, I presume, in order to position themselves even better for the Big Dig that a contingent from the South-Hampton community recently set up a teaching center in Manhattan, where they were given a ten-year lease on a four-building complex of Episcopal churches. “We were commuting back and forth to the city a lot for fund-raising,” explained Tim O’Shea. “This will make things much easier.”

I suppose I really should note here that

it is upon New York, that crumbling body of astral waste, that the Lindisfarne Association depends for its financial existence; but then, as I explained to the community when I told the members I wanted to write about them, this country supports so many really wealthy think tanks and academic retreats where thinkers rub elbows at much greater public expense, that to expose *them* for such an inconsistency in logic, or rail because *they* live out their fantasies of rebellion at indirect cost to the general public, would be to trivialize not only their operation but also my article, in which I had hoped to examine Lindisfarne

“In the Hypogeum on Malta there is a statue of a sleeping prophetess; tradition says that upon waking she would offer her dream to the priest for interpretation. This archaic heritage of the sacred power of place was resurrected by the romantic poets, especially Wordsworth, who tried to show that there was a special affinity between altered states of consciousness and unusual points in the landscape. If one relates all the power points together, he begins to come up with a psychohistorical map of the culture.”

—*Passages About Earth*

as representing the modern method of reasoning, although I can’t be certain they understood just what I meant by this.

At any rate, Thompson in particular was glad that I wanted to write about ideas. When I first called Lindisfarne to ask if I might spend some time there, I was told that research for a piece on the place would probably prove beyond my capabilities: “You’d have to be able to handle guys like Bateson and Schumacher,” warned Thompson. “These are high-powered ideas we deal with here. Besides, we don’t want any journalists spying on us.” When I ignored the warnings and showed up anyway, I was advised by Thompson that he had found (“when interviewing men like Peccei and Heisenberg”) that note-taking, like tape-recording, prevented real communication, and he always preferred simply to “absorb ideas and let them germinate.”

I answered him that my own taste was for accuracy, although I realized the obvious drawback of this preference: that it necessitates a regard not only for facts, but for the relationship between those facts, a tiresome concern that inhibits the imagination. But then the new logicians, with their catalogues and various eclectic listings and anatomies, need give no quarter to these petty regards, and may instead rely on their own intuitions, while visualizing the ethereal web, in the same manner and to much the same effect that the projectors in Laputa listened to the music of the spheres: and this advantage affords them insights that someone trying to explain herself with nothing more than observations and ideas could never hope to enjoy.

HARPER'S  
MARCH 1977

||||



# TELEVISION'S LITTLE DRAMAS

First  
the verdict,  
then  
the show

by  
Herbert Gold

IS IT POSSIBLE to credit a legend which goes all the way back to the early Fifties? Perhaps not, but one would like to believe this one. It's said that the MGM top brass threatened summary dismissal of any executive found with a TV set on studio premises. One was so caught. However, he made an impassioned plea for his job. He kept the set in his offices, he explained, only to stick pins in it. This voodoo calmed the querulous minds which were proclaiming, *Movies Are Better Than Ever*; ergo, *Go Out to a Movie Tonight*.

The scratched, pricked, and tortured television set was thrown on a litter heap, but a beginning had been made in the admission of television into the movie business. Production, which had been centered in New York—remember Rod Serling, Paddy Chayefsky, Robert Alan Aurthur, their lyrical-passionate-realistic Manhattan original plays?—was beckoned home by the wizards of ooze. The studios couldn't beat it, so they joined it. And in the fullness of time the *Movie of the Week* was born. (I leave out some of the intervening begats.)

Let us now begin this definitive ramble through the wonderful world of TV movies with a few questions which are really, like most rhetorical questions, statements:

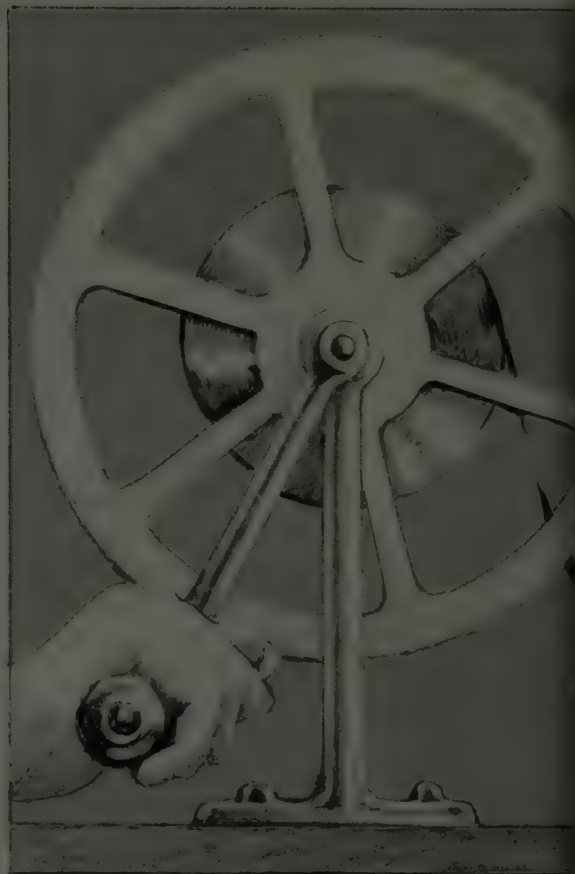
How the box shapes the intentions of the

moviemakers. How the intimacy of the format suits the intimacy of family viewing. How costs reduce. How mass, one-time, no-critic feedback inundation of the market makes for a broad attack: the *TV Guide* advance notice takes the place of the Pauline Kaels of the world. How the accessibility of the snap-button means that the pace must hold, hold, *grip* the viewer. How you have to buy your energy not to satisfy Aristotle's unit, but to keep the viewer on your channel through the commercials.

In a theater, the couple that pays six or eight dollars for tickets—and maybe a babysitter besides, and maybe a cab or parking—won't walk out and head for the theater down the block. There is time to engage their attention. They are sharing the communal experience. But in Sony territory, that private glacial village, the attention must regularly peck and maintain something approaching suspense so the viewer does not switch off during the Buick or Kleenex or Binaca break.

In the living room, someone can say, "Dad, let's go to Channel Seven." Or, more like dad, without asking, will just flip to Channel Seven, because he *knows*. Taste is instantaneous here.

Look for some answers to these questions in the next segment of this scenario. And a look for some questions to these answers.



Herbert Gold is the author of the forthcoming novel *Waiting for Cordelia*.





Fred Marcellino

HERE IS A certain serendipity in the making of any film, even the speeded-up TV version, in which the director functions less as *auteur* than as traffic cop. I was at Van Nuys Airport in Burbank, watching the Israeli commando team run through its stuff for *Raid on Entebbe* and noticed a young black extra from Watts among the Israeli commandos. Why him?

"Accident, I guess," said a production assistant.

"Federal law requires it," said an assistant director.

I asked the extra himself, chic in his commando uniform with Hebrew markings. "Man, I've never been in no movie before. Twenty-five dollars plus two meals."

I said Edgar J. Scherick, the producer: "In the lighting we use, nobody'll see him."

I said the Israeli technical expert, a young man with an M.A. in film from the University of Southern California: "Of course there are black Jews in Israel."

*Raid on Entebbe* was an exceptional production—talent and luck taking hold to break out of the mold of hamburger TV product. It was fun to watch it in action—Charles Bronson; Peter Onorati; John Saxon; Jack Warden; the young

actor who plays Netanyahu; Yaphet Kotto, who plays Idi Amin; Horst Buchholz, who spoke with the German mother of the terrorist he plays; Irvin Kershner, the director, who was up all night rewriting a pedestrian script; the murder of the Warner Brothers *Entebbe* movie when Bronson came aboard at Twentieth Century—the business still provides surprise, excitement, peculiar twists and turns, fun. Yes, there is fun: the all-night encounters and metabolic straining to put all the pieces together.

At an outdoor lunch, served on trays and catered from a truck, I sat with John Saxon, Jack Warden, the Israeli technical expert, Irvin Kershner, and some of the extras. Kibitzing, meddling, just passing the time, I urged Kershner to highlight the black commando. "Kind of an interesting idea," he said. "We don't need a line for him. Just let the camera see him, no comment, let the viewer reason it out."

And so our perception of history could be altered by the accident of a casting director saying to an adventurous kid who just bopped down to Burbank from Watts: "Yeah, you." In front of the black boxes with our beer and chips and fantasies, we look at the screen and have an insight into Israeli society. Correct? Incorrect? Accident? Pure fancy? Fate declares itself through a casting hazard, a di-



Herbert Gold  
TELEVISION'S  
LITTLE  
DRAMAS

rector's impulse. Or perhaps the producer just edits fate out.

Charles Bronson, whose price is \$1 million per picture, doesn't normally make movies for TV. His presence in *Raid on Entebbe* guarantees it a profitable sale in Europe. I asked why he was doing this film.

"Why am I doing it?" he asked cautiously in return.

He was wearing an Israeli general's uniform. His chauffeured black Mercedes was idling nearby. The moral pressure for someone to speak was overwhelming. He won the battle of silence. I said: "You like the story. You like the money. You have the time."

He thought that one over. "I like the story," he said. "The money was right." He suddenly turned the full glare of his face upon mine. "What do you mean, I have the time? You think I work too much?"

Later I asked a production assistant about Bronson's special status. His stance expresses power and a tense self-esteem. "Is he aware of his prerogatives?"

"He's not aware of anything *but* his prerogatives. He refuses to admit this is a TV movie."

In other words, the huge sums paid him guarantee huge sums in return, and that gives him a certain authority, and everyone knows it. It counts in the movie world. It counts in the movie-for-TV world. He may not look like General Shomron. He is much older than General Shomron. He pronounces the word *agin*, meaning one more time, in a way more suitable to a shoot-'em-up cowboy than an Israeli general planning a commando raid. But he looms large on the small and big screens.

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### Pulp movies

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AL LANDERS, normally a producer of buy-your-ticket movies, is now producing *Relentless* as a TV movie. Why? He owned the property. He couldn't get it done in the expensive form. He wanted to get it done. His budget is about \$850,000. "It's a dog's life without a leash," he says. "Making a movie for TV is like trying to cook a soufflé with a match."

Landers and Alan Meyerson, a director of both TV and theatrical movies, utter words of modest self-deprecation: the future is not for the artist in TV. Occasionally there comes along an *Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, which advanced John Korty's career, and perhaps Alex Haley's *Roots* or *Raid on Entebbe* will be landmarks, but usually: "It's as good as you can make it," Landers said, "and that's the end of it."

"You can't make it very good," said Meyerson. "You have a scene where someone says he's going to the store and the next scene is in Havana. You don't even have time to write in a line that says, 'I'm going to the store in Havana.'"

"There's no lifeblood in it," said Landers. "There's passion in this real film I'm preparing now, a blockbuster, I can't tell you what it is. In a TV film, you think, okay, we'll get some money in the foreign sales."

A movie is expensive detail work, a mosaic of elements, but a TV movie has to be a rapid sketch. Some accountants have said to the director, "Here are your actors, your script, your sets, your costumes." The director is down the line in importance. The traffic cop's job is to say, "Move here, move there." In a real movie, despite all the nonsense of *auteur* theory, the director really does oversee things, make decisions, knit it together in the light of his own conception. Korty did this with *Miss Jane Pittman*, but that's a rare exception. TV movies are not made for good reviews, which build an audience. They are made to captivate some viewers *right now*. They are made to keep millions of people steady for the commercials *right now*.

So action, a few recognizable names, a rapid comprehensibility are the elements required. Even if the local TV columnist gives it a great review, this boon usually comes *after* the showing, and no one is going to turn back the time machine to applaud the critic's judgment. There are reruns, of course. But they have to do with ratings, not with a nice column in a newspaper.

Some TV movies survive, of course, as pilots of series. What looks at first like a movie is really a tryout of characters, mood, style, actors, a complex intermeshing of popular possibilities. And so we have the spinoff, the series, the attachment to a continuing story. The pilot is the honored ancestor of the series.

Seeking understanding, one might make this equation: TV movies are to big-screen films as pulp fiction used to be to quality/slick/art fiction. And just as honest pulp—say, Dashiell Hammett or Ross Macdonald—crossed surreptitiously over into the art world, so there are surprises which suddenly appear in the black non-Pandora's box. They are legendary. They often win prizes. They are cited to illustrate how "television movies have come of age" (a frequent popular expression at CBS, circa 1970). They are rare.

Triumph is rare in the quality/slick/art world, also. In filmmaking the money really matters; you need money to take care of cutting, editing, sets, costuming. Size of screen



rhythm of movement really matter. You can't easily break a masterpiece for frequent commercials. Movies are a group art form and a group must eat, must work together, must have time. *It All Happens So Fast* might serve as the title of a study of TV movies. Ray Aghayan, a costume designer, renews the familiar theme: "In television I may have four days to think about it, and a week to do it. When I do a feature film, there's time." John Saxon says: "The difference between TV and real movies? Four months." "I can't detect a rue."

Alan Factor, a former actor now producing films for TV, says, "The main consideration in the review in *TV Guide*, which is a selling proposition, based on preselling, star value." He smacks of *Alice in Wonderland*: first the script, then the show. Another sort of preselling, of course, is the selling to the advertisers, who look for a structure which builds and carries the viewer through the commercial without his tapping his feet or switching channels. "Getting the deal, man," says Factor, "means getting the networks to agree. The sources of financing are limited." In other words, though he didn't say this, it all has something to do with the products sold on television. This can't be a surprise to no one.

Factor and his partner, John Newland, are making a film for TV. They sounded somewhat troubled in preproduction. They cross the river by jumping from one half-submerged and slippery rock to another, and not coming back.

**R**ECENTLY THE PBS television outlet in Los Angeles carried a sensitive and delicate documentary based on the work of an anthropologist who has studied a poverty-stricken neighborhood of old Jews. The film examined their social, emotional, and religious lives, focused on a community center, and showed its subjects to be lovable, testy, charming, pathetic. They are survivors.

Enter a producer of movies of the week. He has a group of antic old folks, cute personalities with lovable conflicts and picturesque traits. A subject for a TV movie here! Also, more to the point, since the cast of characters is locked into a permanent scene, maybe series! "Will you take a meet?" he asks the filmmaker and anthropologist. The producer tells them he sees magic, he feels it, he can't taste it. The documentary is wonderful. It smells audience, humanity, ratings. Who doesn't want more?

nobody.

There is only one problem, "Do these people *have* to be Jewish?"

The filmmaker and the anthropologist are stunned. The central issue was the specific kind of community, the holy days, the Sabbaths, the shared memories and allegiances.

Silence. "No," the anthropologist replies. "They don't even have to be old."

"They don't even have to be human," chimes in the filmmaker. "They could be geriatric bionic people."

It is not a fruitful meet.

**"Twentieth-Century Fox, which was flat on its back, has climbed triumphantly onto its knees, thanks to movies for TV." —a network philosopher**

It's great, but . . .

**A** WRITER I KNOW had an idea for a TV movie. It concerned a varied group of divorced fathers who vacation with their children in a rundown seaside resort. A pair of producers picked it up and said, "Touching! Real! Deeply human! Will you take a meet? Can we run with it?" They ran to a major network. A network producer asked to "take a meet" with the writer. The writer came to Los Angeles and the meeting was taken.

The network producer said: "I like it. I'm Catholic and I've been divorced. I like it a lot. The horror of it. The today of it. Gentlemen, I like it 110 percent."

The three petitioners—two producers and one writer—went out to a pasta palace on La Cienega to celebrate with the usual overeating. The writer called his agent to make sure he would get top dollar for the script—perhaps as much as \$35,000. They had a good dinner. Cigars. Wine. Celebration. They waited.

The network called: "It's a wonderful idea. You boys are the boys to do it. We like it a lot. We're not going to do it."

"Uh, why?"

"It should be made, it's a surefire prize-winner, we don't think it'll get the ratings."

**A**N EXAMPLE OF the working actor, typical of the TV-movie performer at his best, is John Saxon, who gave a strong, carefully-thought-out performance as General Peled in *Raid on Entebbe*. Saxon was discovered by the same agent who found (and named) Tab Hunter and Rock Hudson. A teen-age model in New York, he became a heartthrob of the Fifties in such movies as *High School Confidential*. But Saxon was serious about acting. He appeared in movies directed by John Huston. He appeared opposite Marlon Brando. He took singing lessons. He studied t'ai chi. He worked out. He



# Herbert Gold TELEVISION'S LITTLE DRAMAS

read. He received good notices when reviewers looked beyond the dark, Italian, unsaxon-like good looks. Nevertheless, he has not yet become one of the bankable luminaries, such as Steve McQueen, Brando, Paul Newman, Robert Redford, Warren Beatty. And so he began appearing in movies for TV, in parts ranging from brooding lover to brooding killer, from patient curator of souls to snarling psychotic. He also went on doing roles in feature films. He likes working, month in, month out; he is reliable; directors like working with him; it is known that he gives good value. How does it pay? He makes a lot of money.

Surely he would like to find a big property, the sort of thing Warren Beatty did with *Bonnie and Clyde*, and be one of those lazy superstars, superbankable, instead of being a mere wealthy, hardworking, securely married, successful TV-movie star. So would Elizabeth Ashley. So, for that matter, would Louise Lasser. TV is not quite traveling first class. But it requires workmen, and its workmen do what the hirer needs to have done.

## Above and below the line



BUDGETS ARE INFLATED to make profits, cover overheads, deny participation to participating artists. Budgets are rarely deflated. In the usual format of the usual so-called movie of the week,

the budget is somewhere in the lower end of the \$450,000-\$600,000 spread. There are other variants. For reasons of special hopes, pressures, girlfriends, or ego trips, some specials are made for more. It is curious to compare these figures to the rental fees paid by the networks for theatrical features released on TV. These vary, of course, depending on the venerability of the film, popularity of the stars (or "factors"), previous theatrical success. NBC paid \$5 million for one screening of *Gone With the Wind*. Sums between \$300,000 and \$1 million are common.

Film budgets are divided into two components—"below-the-line" and "above-the-line" costs. Above-the-line costs include story and script, producer fees, director fees, main player fees. Below-the-line costs include everything else through delivery of a negative to the studio. For a TV movie, the minimum above-the-line costs run approximately:

Story and script	\$15,000
Director	15,000
Producer	15,000
Main players (3)	40,000
	<hr/> \$85,000

Maximum movie-of-the-week figures might double this.

Given this approximation, and assuming total budget of \$450,000, about \$365,000 remains for the rest of the production. Typical this would allow a shooting schedule of fifty days at an average cost of about \$22,000 per shooting day. Now we can introduce another element in the comparison with theatrical features: the shooting ratio. This denotes the number of feet of film which will be shot in relation to the number of feet which will appear in the finished film. The movie-of-the-week format involves ninety minutes of film, 8,000 feet of film in the finished product. For theatrical features in studio work, a 4-to-1 or 5-to-1 ratio is acceptable; location work may send it high as 12 to 1 or even 15 to 1; some meticulous or profligate directors—Arthur Penn famous for this—shoot as much as twenty-five times as much film as they will use to get exactly the choices and effects they want.

For a movie of the week, the director may be fired (sometimes is) for shooting at a ratio greater than 3 to 1 or 4 to 1, including both studio and location work. "Zip zip, set up, shoot; zip zip, set up, shoot again," said one director. "I'm a goddamn traffic cop. Other goddamn traffic cops aren't fired for telling their name. I won't even give you my bad number."

The speedup and economy affects the TV film in several ways. An attempt is made to keep the work inside the studio as much as possible. The elements are under control; no planes suddenly coming in, no sudden changes of light. Also the director attempts to cram as much information into his master shot as he can. The master shot is often a composite made in a single take, of a traditional master plus different angle coverage. This saves money in the form of footage cranked through the camera and labs. Perhaps more important, it saves time.



TV FILMS ARE a part of the TV marketing and sales tool. They are not paid for by the viewer or by Aristotle, and consequently have less responsibility to the classical unities. One might define the TV playwright's form as follow short scene, followed by irrelevant interruption, followed by short scene punchy enough to carry the viewer through the next irrelevant interruption, followed by short scene... A variant is the pilot feature. The original *Waltons* was a CBS Christmas special with Patricia Neal, made with more care than the spinoff



ries. Patricia Neal disappeared from the program. Internal commercials appeared. If *Raid on Entebbe* becomes a series—gallant Israeli commandos strike again! again!—one can be sure that Charles Bronson will slip away in the night.


Another variant is the miniseries, which our old friend the Saturday-afternoon serial, now grandly named “the novel of the screen,” and still another variant is represented in *Raid on Entebbe*—the hybrid film, made for television in this country, good enough for theatrical viewing abroad, and perhaps eventually for some theatrical viewing here, too. This double reverse twist occurred with *Shogun’s Song*.) Charles Bronson is a big star in Europe. Peter Finch and Irvin Kershner pass up the project. The budget and care can be increased accordingly. Better typewriters and bond paper don’t significantly improve the yield of a poet or novelist. But time and technical improvements bought by adequate amounts of money significantly change the possibilities of a technical and group medium film.

Summing up the difference, a low-budget ninety-minute theatrical film costing, say, \$1 million (below the line, \$750,000), might be a shooting schedule of forty to forty-eight days. What it comes down to, for the director and the care he puts into it, is approximately forty-five days to get his ninety minutes, against fifteen days for the TV feature. The movie you see in your local Spanish palace is not necessarily three times as good as the one on the set at the foot of your bed. But the time difference is a significant element in the quality of film.

Producers of movies for TV are not always as articulate as other award-winning members of the human race. I asked a successful producer—a word which covers the functions of promoter, agent, accountant, censor, salesman, baby—how much one of his pictures cost. “Really,” I said. “Don’t give me.”

He paused, startled. He looked deep into my yellow-brown eyes. He said: “I can’t just tell you that cold turkey.”

### Firming the prospects

 IDNEY BECKERMAN was visiting the set of *Raid on Entebbe* as a friend of the production. His son wrote the original script. The elder Beckerman, a good-looking, relaxed, curly-haired, and literate man, known to his friends as the Prince of Darkness, is a big-time producer. *Marathon Man* is an example of a big-time production.

I asked him what was the most important difference between a big-time theatrical production and a movie for the small (though getting larger) screen. “Time,” he said. “You don’t have the leeway. The shooting schedule. The money. But here, of course, you get a Bill Butler, cinematographer for *Jaws*, you get an Irvin Kershner—that kind of energy. So you can cross over to big screen from here. You get all-stars, you double your shooting schedule, you have a hot item, you get Warner Brothers to abandon their *Entebbe* item, you don’t necessarily shoot in Israel and Africa, but you do a biggish film anyway. Bronson makes it a theatrical feature in Europe.”

“I know.”

“I suppose people mention it to you. Well, there’s an electricity that changes things.”

The *Entebbe* rescuers stand tall and walk proud with Charles Bronson firming up their prospects.

On a day when I watched the filming of a scene at Van Nuys Airport, General Gur, played by Jack Warden, was demonstrating the planned landing at *Entebbe* to General Shomron (Charles Bronson), General Peled (John Saxon), and Colonel Netanyahu, played by Stephen Schacht. Shooting had been delayed; they had worked until 4:00 A.M. that morning; a certain amount of coffee nerves. Extras—the Israeli commando team—were moseying about, reading *Variety* and munching tacos.

The miniclimax of the scene comes when General Gur demonstrates the landing of the assault plane with a balsa-wood model on which a 10-cent wheel was supposed to come off (darting glances, consternation, menace). The toy plane was late getting there. The wheel didn’t come off right. The problems of this long scene, which engaged hundreds of grown men and women, at a cost of perhaps not much under \$100,000, exemplified the magic and pain, the sorrow and the aggravations, of any moviemaking. The producer was clutching his side (appendix? wallet?) and shouting: Do it differently, do something else! The director, Irvin Kershner, known as an intuitive perfectionist, was hitting his forehead, where the frontal lobe, filled with ideas, swells and meets the limits of bone. He wanted it done the right way, his way, the creative way, the exciting way. . . . It cost a lot.

“And that,” said an assistant, as we watched through the long night, “shows this is not just another dumb movie for TV. We’re hanging that whole scene on waiting for the god-damn balsa-wood plane to act right. What else do you need to prove it’s one hell of a major production?”

**“TV movies are to big-screen films as pulp fiction used to be to quality/slick/art fiction.”**

HARPER'S  
MARCH 1977



## BOOKS

# THE COMPLETE NEW YORKER

by Malcolm Muggeridge

Letters of E. B. White, collected and edited by Dorothy Lobrano Guth. Harper & Row, \$15.

**T**HIS COLLECTION of letters covering most of his adult life, by so accomplished, sharp-eyed, and seasoned a writer as E. B. White, amounts to an autobiography. In some respects, it is to be preferred to one. For instance, the letters express passing moods as they occur instead of retrospectively, and are addressed to particular individuals—in White's case, mostly his wife, Katharine (or Kay, or K), relatives and close friends—rather than to the general public. This gives the reader a more personal feel of the writer, whose day-to-day reflections and states of mind, what he does with himself, his manner of living and working—the last particularly interesting to fellow vendors of words like myself—are conveyed informally and lightheartedly, not in a considered, dished-up version. As we say in the TV studios, ad-libbed, as distinct from being read off a Teleprompter. Nor, in considering the project to pub-

lish his letters, can the thought have been absent from White's mind that the letters were already written, whereas an autobiography would be still to do.

What tends to get left out, White being a *New Yorker* product through and through, bone of its bone, are the full-throated diapasons, or outbursts of rhetorical wisdom. If he wrote anything in the nature of love letters to Katharine, none is included; the letters to her nearly all begin "Dear Katharine," and the only instance of what might pass for a declaration of love is neutralized by being offered in accordance with a specification in the *Reader's Digest*, by no means White's favorite publication. Anyone looking for a dark night of the soul, or, for that matter, a bright day, will look in vain. A lot of the substance of the letters could have gone straight into "The Talk of the Town," the *New Yorker* department in which White was most heavily engaged. Doubtless, some of it did.

Clearly, a certain amount of linking material and footnotes were required to make a coherent narrative of the letters. This has been undertaken with

skill, tact, and care by Dorothy Lobrano Guth, the daughter of White's longstanding friend, G. S. Lobrano. Altogether, she has done a fine editing job. From it all a clear picture of White emerges, as well as of *The New Yorker* in whose columns so much of his work has appeared, and with whose fellow contributors he has been so closely associated. He even married into the magazine! Like one of those faithful couples who used to be found in stable homes, the husband doing odd jobs about the house and the garden, the wife looking after the silver and supervising the meals, so the Whites, Harold Ross's, later William Shawn's unruly establishment at 25 West Forty-third Street.

As the letters indicate, the White singly and together, embody the whole character of the magazine: its glamorous banality, its vivacious tedium, its stylish commonness. More so even than its founder and truly brilliant first editor, Ross, not to mention colorful contributors like Alexander Woollcott, whom White disliked for his flowery literary style and readiness to advertise Seagram's (eight-year-old imported) whiskey, and James Thurber, with whom White collaborated on *Sex Necessary?* and whom he held in affection, though, after the publication of Thurber's *Years With Ross* there were reservations. Almost, the White might have said, following Louis XIV's famous remark about the state: *New Yorker, c'est nous!*

**A**S MAY READILY be imagined to an editor of *Punch* in the Fifties, utterly unsuited to the job, grappling hopelessly and helplessly with the somber to



Stanley Stark



# THE TIMES THEY ARE A'CHANGIN'



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ds investigating in this country.  
e reopened the JFK assassination  
ew the whistle on Earl Butz's  
amous racial slur...sounded the  
national alarm on the little  
osol cans that could be the  
ath of us all...broke the story of

over-the-counter drugs that are  
worthless or even harmful.

**Hello, Abbie.**

We went underground to interview  
Abbie Hoffman...and the FBI is still  
trying to figure it out. We named "the  
ten dumbest Congressmen," along  
with the King of Dumb.

We told the story of gay parents  
who are fighting for their kids...of  
single grandparents who have to live  
in sin to make ends meet...of mari-  
juana's medical benefits. We dis-  
covered est and its Fuhrer...showed  
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of trying to make the English laugh, *The New Yorker*, its personnel, practices, and contents, provided an obsessive interest. In subsequent years, when to my great relief I was no longer professionally engaged in the humor business, my interest lapsed. Reading White's letters has revived it. To us in Bouverie Street, where *Punch* was then edited, *The New Yorker* seemed so grand in its fatness and its affluence. Our attitude toward it reminded me of something that happened to Woolcott when he visited Moscow at the time of the collectivization famine—I was a newspaper correspondent there then. He was standing in front of the Metropole Hotel waiting for a taxi when a passerby came up to him and ran a hand lightly over his large stomach, encased, as it was, in a sleek camel's-hair coat, as though paying a tribute to the maintenance of so well-covered a human frame.

We looked through the magazine wistfully, rather as the vicar of some sprawling parish on the outskirts of Birmingham might look at a Mayfair church with awning and red carpet out in preparation for a fashionable wedding. All those pages and pages of glossy advertising, with letterpress running through them like a meandering river through a lush countryside! Picnic parties in a Rolls-Royce car whose smart chauffeur in peaked cap and bright leggings was bringing out the luncheon basket containing a well-exposed bottle of very special champagne. Diners gazing appreciatively at one another across a shaded table shining with silver and linen, he in impeccable smoking, she jeweled and décolletée, and, as the caption explained, using a perfume calculated to make her more so than ever before the evening was out.

Then the covers, so varied, bright, and beautiful, whereas we in those days, except for special numbers, struggled on with our invariable Dicky Doyle design, which on a newsstand gave no indication as to whether the issue displayed was current, or last week's, or last year's. In due course I did manage to introduce a weekly cover change, but somehow in Bouverie Street we never got the dashing effect they did on West Forty-third. All that remains now, by the way, of the Dicky Doyle design is one tiny phallic motif which has, significantly enough, been incorporated into the masthead of *Private Eye*. I may

add that perhaps our finest hour, when I was editing *Punch*, was provided by the production of a *New Yorker* parody as a colored insert in one of our special numbers. It was highly regarded at the time, and is, I have been told, nowadays quite a collector's item. Our artists, I recall, found Thurber's drawing, like Winston Churchill's prose, easy to parody. Likewise, the fiction—Mrs. White's domain; but those paragraphs at the beginning of the book which were White's specialty, so deceptively simple and innocently funny, gave a lot of trouble.

When *New Yorker* staff members were in London they would usually drop in to see us in Bouverie Street, and vice versa. I well remember a visit by the Whites. She came across as wholly American, a very high-grade specimen of the sort of lady I was to meet on the American lecture circuit; whereas what struck me about him—and it is entirely borne out by his letters—was his likeness to the older style of *Punch* writer. How can I describe it?—a certain shyness with egotistic undertones, a child-like but still studied absorption in the particularities of life rather than the generalities, a courtesy of manner that was somehow chilling, an absent-mindedness which had at the core of it a glint of self-consciousness. I am thinking, for instance, of Evoe (E.V. Knox), a previous *Punch* editor who used to attend the weekly round-table luncheons—*The New Yorker* has them, too!—in my time; also of A.A. Milne, like White, a master hand at children's stories. So were Arthur Ransome, C.S. Lewis, Tolkien; above all, of course, Lewis Carroll. Writers in this field seem to have certain characteristics in common, one of them being, I suspect, a distaste for the company of children.

IT IS STRANGE that reading White's letters—very easily, as it happened, while my ancient carcass was being hauled around Australia and New Zealand—should have so vividly evoked memories of *Punch*. After all, White had no connection with the magazine save that one visit with his wife, though it is perhaps significant that he is, as far I know, the only *New Yorker* writer who was actually propositioned to become a contributor. There is a letter dated December 29, 1951, to Kenneth Bird—the artist

"Fougasse," and my predecessor as editor—politely declining an offer. The fact remains, however, that White's view of what he was getting at as a writer tallies exactly with the *Punch* style as I came upon it out of the blue. I confess with a good deal of alarm and despondency. Take this, for instance, in a letter to White's brother Stanley Hart White, dated January 1920:

*I discovered a long time ago that writing of the small things of the day, the trivial matters of the heart, the inconsequential but near things of this living, was the only kind of creative work which I could accomplish with any sincerity or grace. As a reporter I was a flop. . . . Not till the New Yorker came along did I ever find any means of expressing those impertinences and irrelevancies. Thus yesterday, setting out to get a story on how police horses are trained, I ended by writing a story entitled "How Police Horses Are Trained" which never even mentions a police horse, but has to do entirely with my own absurd adventures at police headquarters.*

I found columns of overmatter in the vein when I took over in Bouverie Street, though admittedly not as well done as White does it. He is easily the best hand at the inconsequential in my time, but it is a vanishing art, like thatching, or shoeing horses. One thing I like very much about his occasional pieces is their freedom from the shackles of facile comment on public affairs that is so common nowadays. Surely he deserves a special accolade for the sentences from the index to his letters that include Stalin, Churchill, De Gaulle, Mussolini, and Frank Sinatra—I was hoping to add the Kennedys, but John F. gets a mention in connection with the award to White of a Freedom Medal. We all have our lapses. Never did he describe himself lying awake in bed worrying about Czechoslovakia, or moving the cutlery on the dinner table to demonstrate how he who holds X over Y dominates Z. His only little peccadillo in this field is an obstinately held belief in world government, on whose practicability, if not practicability, he is liable to insist—to the point of tedium, as Ross considered. There was also the storm he raised about an article in *Quire* magazine sponsored by the X Corporation and written by Harri Salisbury. Noting that Salisbury received \$40,000 for his article



000 expenses from the Xerox Corporation, and speaking as a former contributor of a monthly book article to *Esquire* over twelve years, I can only observe a little ruefully that no such temptation ever came my way.

One other venture of White's into *politik*, described in letters to Kathleen, very much took my fancy. This was his participation in a project for producing a pamphlet expounding the Four Freedoms enunciated by President Roosevelt in his State of the Union address to Congress in January 1942, after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The persons involved were Reinhold Niebuhr, Malcolm Cowley, and Max Lerner. They met in Washington, D.C., under the auspices of Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress. The original intention had been to entrust White with the first freedom—of speech and expression—but MacLeish on consideration took it away from him, a painless action, as it turned out. From his point of view, he was probably right; White really did believe that the gods were for telling the truth, and he wrote accordingly, so that the pamphlet might well have blown the whole thing right out of the water. In the end he was given the rewrite job for the whole text. I imagine him groaning at the task.

The third of the freedoms—from want, and, as White remarked, a nice freedom if you can get it—gave them a lot of trouble. They adjourned to discuss it over a tasteful luncheon provided by MacLeish—sherry, then a special noodle dish with sour cream and grated cheese, then ham and mushrooms and Schoonmaker red wine but didn't get far. The freedoms, at least the first two, were inscribed on the occupation currency issued in Italy by the Allied military government at a time when there was nothing to buy with it, which led to wry comments among the soldiers. I wonder what happened to the pamphlet; probably it just lay about in embassies and information centers along with old copies of *Punch* and the *New Yorker*. In the light of subsequent happenings and the present state of the world, it would take a very guine mind indeed to suppose it had entered any of the freedoms, least of all that third one. ■■■

Malcolm Muggeridge is the author most recently of a two-volume autobiography, *Chronicles of Wasted Time*.

# VERSE

by Dennis Silk

## FORLORN HOPE

Soldiers arrive at a valley between two towns. And scattered over a meadow there, a peaceful battery of bedsteads and cupboards, tables and chairs. Opening drawers, the young lieutenant sorts out family papers. A mortarman finds a Penelope, a chair still rocking.

## BEGINNING

Under the heartbeat a phantom  
saying It is not I who stir the sugar.

You drink tea in a café with too many hats  
too many coats on coatracks  
unwrap the little lump  
and stir what clouds me.

And there's a paper bag in your house  
from which that same stuff pours onto the floor  
till it's the soil you walk on  
candy for the party  
where you shoot and laugh.

Then I stick up my spectral hands  
for your trigger works well.

Child of malice,  
sugar-heart, are you beginning?

## EPILOGUE FOR SOLDIER SCHWEIK

Now boots walk in their sleep,  
Schweik, rescue my little  
and my big toe from cramp.  
We'll loll in the capital.

And it's not that color sergeant who called out  
but the young men as we advanced,  
"rearwardly," sweet Schweik, from the front.



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# BOOKS IN BRIEF

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by Michael Malone

**Nixon vs. Nixon: An Emotional Tragedy**, by David Abrahamsen, M.D. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$10.95.

Since Erik Erikson's *Young Man Luther*, psychohistory has come a long distance in a short while, possibly because it has been downhill most of the way. Those, like Hitler, who have duped us, who have climbed and then plummeted from Fortune's wheel, maintain an irresistible fascination. As a result, Richard Nixon may one day have the distinction of being the most written-about President in history—so much does our victimization intrigue us.

Daniel Abrahamsen is an authority on crime and violence. Years of research obviously went into his evaluation of the "subjective" life of this living political figure with whom he has never spoken. Analysis based on second-hand materials can, we are told, sometimes reveal more than the subjects themselves can, making it possible to explain the inner man without meeting him. He reminds us, perhaps inopportunistically in this context, that under such circumstances Daniel Ellsberg was evaluated by physicians of the CIA. Despite his care, Abrahamsen's book seems sometimes subject to the dangers of his approach—fitting a life to the couch of a Procrustean Freudianism and overdetermining the importance of trivial events in everyday life by *reading back* into them the significance of powerful events in public life, training the Palomar telescope on trouser buttons. For example, one may legitimately (if arguably) propose that Nixon's secret bombing of Cambodia was the act of a paranoid passive-aggressive, but to assert that his mashing potatoes when a child to help his mother is equally an expression of repressed rage seems a retroactive diagnosis. Thus, Nixon's early years, which in another framework could provide the plot for a Horatio Alger story (a poor boy,

dutiful, diligent, studious, hardworking, and determined, becomes President), are shown to have been blatantly full of ominous foreshadowings of future moral abnormality. Like potatoes.

Apparently we still do have Dick Nixon to kick around. Dr. Abrahamsen throws the textbook at the former President, describing him as insecure, indecisive, inflexible, withdrawn, niggardly, officious, obsessive, rigid, arrogant, devious, narcissistic, power-hungry, bitter, vindictive, self-pitying, tense, frustrated, "happyless," isolated, orally fixated, anally fixated, sexually repressed, compulsively competitive, anxiety-ridden, antisocial, morbidly oversensitive, cold, hyper-controlled, sarcastic, and accident-prone. As if all this weren't bad enough, Nixon apparently also suffered from an impaired masculine identification, passivity with overcompensatory hostile aggression and viciousness, paranoia, clumsiness, sadomasochism, hysterical exhibitionism, psychopathia, a deformed super-ego, a double personality, and (it goes without saying) an unresolved Oedipal complex. When you add Harry Truman's rather more succinct appraisal ("a shifty-eyed goddamn liar"), the success of a man laboring under such insuperable handicaps seems almost as miraculous as the achievements of Helen Keller. It makes one wonder if the subject in need of all this study is Richard Nixon himself. Perhaps what we really ought to have are a few psychohistories of the American culture that twice elected the individual Dr. Abrahamsen has described to the Presidency of this nation, the second time with the largest majority ever given a candidate for that office.

**Changing**, by Liv Ullmann. Alfred A. Knopf, \$8.95.

If Truman Capote could act as well as Liv Ullmann can write, he could

play Hamlet straight to standing room only for the rest of his life. As if the sublimely unegalitarian gods had decided to reaffirm through her the credo "To those who have, more shall be given," this excellent actress and beautiful woman has now written an extraordinarily intelligent book. Because she is herself that demi-deity, the movie star, anything Liv Ullmann wrote would be remarked upon, but this autobiography, which she wrote first in Norwegian, then in English, is remarkable—not at all because she is who she is but because she writes as well as she does.

The book's power lies not simply in its startling honesty (no doubt Hedy Lamarr was honest), but in an honesty shaped by an acuity of observation and wise humor that invite comparison with Lillian Hellman's *Pentimento*. At times her Hollywood sketches—Oscar night, a blind date with Kissinger, a tour of Hugh Hefner's estate conducted by "rabbit girls"—have the satiric edge of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Pat Hobby Stories* without their sentimentality. An old makeup man offers advice: "'Sparkle,' he whispered to me as I went into the lights and the heat and the cameras. 'That's what Shirley Temple's mother always said to her little daughter.' I spent some months in Hollywood and I tried to sparkle." "Vanessa Redgrave rings my doorbell and talks about revolution for two hours without once looking at me." Jerry Brown "holds a dead bird in his hand and believes it is an omen. I don't know of what."

The vivid, almost cinematic imagery and the emotional intensity she brings to bear on her childhood in Norway, her life with her daughter, her evolving understanding of (and respect for) herself as a person, a woman, and an artist, the pleasure and pain of her five-year love affair with Ingmar Bergman in a section that ends, "You cannot imagine how much we hoped in the beginning"—these moments and feel-



ings are as strongly defined as her characterizations in all those Bergman movies. Who taught whom?

**Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties**, by Morris Dickstein. Basic Books, \$11.95.

In *Tom Jones*, Thwackum tells Square, "When I mention religion I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England." In a way, when Morris Dickstein mentions American culture, he means literary culture; and not only literary culture, but New York highbrow literary culture; and not only New York highbrow literary culture, but the culture cultivated by those who read and write for *Partisan Review* and *The New York Review of Books* and gather to give each other book awards. Though one of his historical conclusions is that "the line between high culture and popular culture gave way in the Sixties," *Gates of Eden* is not a study of the greatest culture for the greatest number, few of whom might agree that the 1952 *Partisan Review* symposium, "Our Country and Our Culture," is "the most famous indication" of a new mood in the Fifties. For both the washed and unwashed majority, the Saturnalian expansions and Eumenidean explosions of the Sixties are probably most immediately symbolized by marches and music, hair and *Hair*, sit-ins to love-ins to blow-outs, *Blow-up* and *Easy Rider* and *The Graduate*, Esalen and Hare Krishna, Cassius Clay becoming Muhammad Ali, *Life with Father* becoming *All in the Family*, and Mouseketeers becoming the martyred "bums" of Kent State. But Eugene McCarthy is not mentioned in this book, nor is Angela Davis, nor even *The Feminine Mystique*—in fact, the entire phenomenon of the awakening women's movement is pretty much passed over; the only female to merit as much as a paragraph is Toni Morrison, a black novelist published in the Seventies. Joan Baez is mentioned solely for having ushered in Bob Dylan, who, with the Beatles of *Revolver* and *Sergeant Pepper*, focus the one chapter not devoted to writing, "The Age of Rock Revisited." Of Motown not a riff.

While agreeing that "few kids became radicals, hippies or freaks in the

Sixties from reading *Eros and Civilization* or *Growing Up Absurd*," Dickstein's hypothesis is that a discovery of "what life felt like" (his stated concern) is "more truly expressed in the work of artists and intellectuals" since they are "the most sensitive reflections of alterations in consciousness." Thus the death of George Jackson is a parenthesis in a sentence about James Baldwin, and the "Weatherman phase" of radical confrontation and conservative backlash in the late Sixties is approached by close readings of the Borgesian short fiction of Barth and Barthelme.

Dickstein is a bright and knowledgeable literary critic with an eminently readable style, and his choice of methodology is, of course, his prerogative. But to untangle an epoch as sprawling and public as the Sixties by pulling on such fine threads seems comparable to explaining the Restoration by exfoliating the Earl of Rochester's private library.

At times Dickstein writes from a perspective so sweeping, and from a height

so removed that his conclusions claim an authority appropriate to *The Waning of the Middle Ages* but alarming in such sentences as "the best rock albums from the mid-Sixties are as fresh and exciting as they were ten years ago." Dickstein is himself (as he tells us in a self-indulgent "autobiographical" epilogue) under the direct influence of the period he anatomizes. Fifteen years ago he would not have told us, "Growing up I had always been a good boy. It was hard to know what 'good' meant anymore," nor said of a text, "This may be bull-shit but it is significant bull-shit." The mixture here of detached absolutism and personal immersion in his material is maddening.

This is not at all "what life felt like" for most of us in the Sixties. Neither are Dickstein's ideas in the vanguard of literary criticism. The irony of *Gates of Eden* is that it is finally as middlebrow as the culture Dickstein would choose to ignore.

Michael Malone is the author of two novels, *Painting the Roses Red* and *The Delectable Mountains*.

**Solution to the February Puzzle**

**Notes for "Hex Signs"**

1. POLITE, anagram; 2. SAIL-OR; 3. PU-REST; 4. B(and)-ERETS(anagram); 5. SA-M.B.-AS; 6. SA-LADS; 7. KN(I)VES (knives); 8. V.I(P.)-LEST; 9. B(y)-LAMES; 10. (re) MEMBER; 11. RE-PEAL, pun; 12. REP.-AIR; 13. SKUNKS, two meanings; 14. OC-EL-OT (rbusier), reversed; 15. ALCOVE, anagram; 16. READER, hidden; 17. DANGER, anagram; 18. TAINTS, anagram; 19. U.(N)MAS)K.; 20. MIL-TON; 21. LIVERY, anagram; 22. SH(ERR)Y; 23. SINGER (sing); 24. S(inging)-T-(ERE)O; 25. ATTARS, anagram; 26. PO-LICE; 27. SP.-OILS; 28. RELISH, two meanings; 29. SIRE-N.S.; 30. PEOPLE, two meanings; 31. L.-ITTLE(anagram); 32. MAL(reversal)-ICE; 33. POSSES(s); 34. LI(L.I.)ES; 35. (n) UNS-(p)URE; 36. PUR(PL.)E; 37. SHE-L(O)VE; 38. C.-LAMOR(anagram); 39. T-ROOPS (reversal); 40. LINERS, two meanings; 41. AVEN(U)E; 42. SPLI(N.)T; 43. SHOVE-L.; 44. CL(ue)-OVEN; 45. STERNE, hidden; 46. SENDE(anagram)-R.; 47. A(VIA)TE; 48. DE(TE)S, reversal; 49. W(ith)-INNER; 50. FI(N.)ERY; 51. BE(STE.)D; 52. PLAITS, homonym, plates; 53. R(A)REFY; 54. BEGGAR, hidden.

*Note:* In the January puzzle, "New Directions," a revised clue for 32D inadvertently replaced 32A, leaving no correct clue for 32A (MASSEUSE). Despite this a number of entrants submitted correct solutions. In recognition of the additional difficulty, we have chosen six winners this month instead of the usual three. Our apologies to the frustrated.



## MOVIES

# HUMILIATION IN HOLLYWOOD

A review of *The Last Tycoon*

by Stephen Koch

**H**UMILIATION—humiliation in Hollywood—was the unlikely muse that diverted F. Scott Fitzgerald's imagination from the romance of money to (what is not quite the same thing) the romance of power. In *The Last Tycoon*, the unfinished novel he was writing when he died there, Fitzgerald was trying to redeem his failure in Hollywood with an elegy to power, to the man of action he was not, to American failure and success. And now Hollywood has turned *The Last Tycoon* into a movie—a development rife with paradox, to say the least—and one of its chief interests lies in the role of the writer, of writing itself. Not only is *The Last Tycoon* Fitzgerald's only book about power—about money-making, about work, hiring, firing, production—it is also the only novel in which he concerns himself with the creative imagination. The characters in his earlier novels had been rich either through inheritance or some hokey, unexamined, bootlegging magic, and they had certainly never been artists. But the pivot of *The Last Tycoon* is a classically American struggle, which Hollywood violently provoked in Fitzgerald himself, between the man of imagination and the man of action, between the artist and the tycoon.

It is unpleasant to think about the experiences (and the self-hatred) that led Fitzgerald to such a debate and such a book: writing in a losing race against death, a failure in his own eyes, Fitzgerald gives virtually all his

sympathy to the tycoon. In his idealized portrait of Monroe Stahr—based directly on Irving Thalberg, the “boy wonder” production chief of MGM between 1923 and 1933—he casts a romantic glow over the “production genius,” the slender, rheumatic, dying young king of Hollywood who, in his obsession with movie- (and money-) making, Fitzgerald hoped to make into a kind of doomed hero who could stand beside that other dynamic dreamer, Gatsby.

Hollywood is the natural terrain for this theme because it provides the most conspicuous arena for the belief that the artist and the tycoon can sometimes merge. Opposed to that fantasy is another, equally powerful, myth, which holds that any creative artist who enters a collaborative and commercial medium like the movies has wrecked his creative soul. It should be said that this was not Fitzgerald's own view. Though driven to that last little cubicle at MGM by his enormous debts—debts mainly to publishers, by the way—he was genuinely interested in mastering the film craft and making movies. Fitzgerald was a romantic, but never an elitist artist: he had always written with his eye on a large-scale audience, and to him, hackwork meant hasty, shoddy, empty work, rather than merely the popular. He brought that distinction to filmmaking, too, and felt his own humiliation in Hollywood not in the simple fact that

*Stephen Koch, author of Night Watch and Stargazer, is at work on a new novel.*

he was there, but that he was *failing* there. His attitude was completely unlike that of his friends and literary colleagues around the commissary table—Robert Benchley, Dorothy Parker—who always regarded themselves as slumming (albeit in a remarkably comfortable slum) while they bitterly entertained one another with stories about the bastards and imbeciles—Thalberg chief among them—who employed them. After a certain number of drinks, Dorothy Parker used to finger her Valentina gown, let her eyes mist over, and murmur: “I *used* to be a poet.” The pose was perverse, but good self-protection, of a kind: while Parker proclaimed her contempt for the producers' judgment of her work, Fitzgerald's earnestness made him all the more vulnerable when his efforts were chewed to bits in the studio machine. Fitzgerald did not despise the movies, and he did not try to protect himself by claiming to despise them. Neither did he despise Thalberg. On the contrary, he wanted to *be* Thalberg, to have the power not to fail, and control the medium to which he'd turned. It was a hopeless dream, but then such dreams were his specialty, and rather than sink into the masochism of mere wishing, he chose to honor his wish by writing *The Last Tycoon*.

The manuscript he left behind is unfinished and unsatisfactory, merely promising. The question left unanswered is whether the grim self-hatred underlying his vision of artist and tycoon could have reached the “tragic”





resolution he wanted, or whether it, in its turn, would have also undermined the book, chewed it up, as the studios did his scripts. As it stands, I can think of no work about the creative imagination in which artists come off so badly or are treated with such contempt: a bunch of drunks, greedy children, gifted incompetents, cripples—Stahr is *right* to treat them like the hired help they are. The Hollywood whose vineyards Fitzgerald worked and died was the Hollywood of Thalberg's inflexible studio system: a place where several scriptwriters were given the same project behind each others' backs; where directors didn't even see their rushes, still less edit them; where all power of choice in the finished film rested with the production executive. When Stahr's minions complain that their work will lack unity, he imperiously replies, "*I am the unity.*"

And so he was, so he was. It gave him an almost metaphysical glamour in Fitzgerald's eyes, because he associated the unity achieved through power with a unity of the self. This most destructive of American half-truths is one which, in a manner appropriate to half-truths, at least half of Fitzgerald's mind had come to believe. The other half was thinking about the forces that destroy even intact egos. But in contrast to his own fragmented, fertile, self-destructive nature, Thalberg-Stahr seemed a *real person*, paradoxically the only one capable of running the dream factory. "Writers," meanwhile, "aren't people exactly"—so we're told by the callow Hollywood brat who is the novel's narrator—"or rather if they're any good, they're a whole *lot* of people trying to be one. It's like actors, trying so pathetically not to look in mirrors."

**T**O MAKE A MOVIE about all this invites paradox, and one of the several paradoxes of Elia Kazan's film version is that it fails—when it fails—mainly because of its script. Where it succeeds—and it is intermittently wonderful—it succeeds largely because of a very self-possessed performance by a lowly actor, Robert De Niro, as Monroe Stahr. Times have changed in Hollywood since Fitzgerald tried to capture it. Harold Pinter, who wrote the script,

decided to leave the unfinished story unfinished—surely not out of "respect" for Fitzgerald?—so that wherever the original was left undeveloped, we gaze into a dull void, above all at the end, which comes not as a resolution, but an extremely vacuous question. What happens? It is vulgar to ask, apparently. Pinter has an unfortunate middle-brow tendency when in doubt (which seems to be often) to become solemnly and portentously abstract. This tiresome flaw, in combination with De Niro's absolute mastery of the role and Kazan's sometimes very stylish direction, produces a strange result: the film is dramatically unsatisfying in a way Thalberg would never have tolerated for an instant, and at the same time occasionally beautiful in a way he probably could never have understood. What dazzled Fitzgerald about Thalberg was his confidence and energy; what excited him about movies was the romance of forging a new dimension of the human imagination out of the merest pictures flying through the air. Two generations later, *The Last Tycoon* is a beautiful and interesting failure precisely because it lacks confidence and energy, because it substitutes the uncertain beauties of nostalgia and style for whatever inventiveness was required to fulfill its promise.

The film, in fact, becomes sentimental over the very issues Fitzgerald was determined to confront, and thereby misses its own interesting lesson about Hollywood. Perhaps the finest moment in the film (taken word for word from the book's best passage) gives us Thalberg-Stahr in his office "dealing with" a supercilious, distinguished, alcoholic British novelist (played by Donald Pleasance at his unshaven, ratlike best) who objects to working with studio hacks, who loathes the movies and never goes, who despises what he's been asked to do. De Niro makes the sequence a tour de force: darting around his office, inventing out of the air, the tycoon enacts an elaborate, enigmatic scene, a matter of a woman slipping into the writer's office and, thinking she is alone, dumping the contents of her purse and salvaging a nickel from the change; she then hurries to a stove and begins to burn her black gloves; the phone rings, she speaks into it, then suddenly notices that a man is standing in the door—

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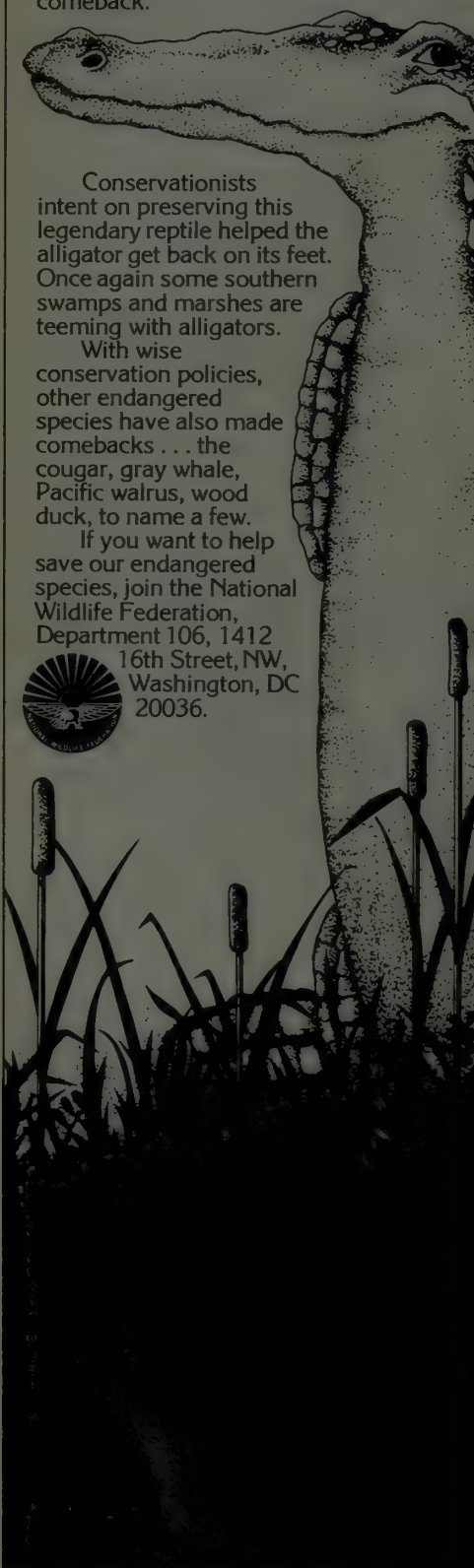
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## MOVIES

way. He has been there watching her all the time.

"What happens?" the bewildered writer asks.

"I don't know," Stahr replies, sinking into his chair. "I was just making pictures."

And what was the nickel for? Stahr smiles. The nickel was for the movies.

It is a wonderful scene, magically acted, and at the end of this little argument about art—about "making pictures"—we find ourselves on the tycoon's side, we join in his patronizing smile, and we still support him later when, after an alcoholic binge and much hysteria, the distinguished novelist gets the crisp heave-ho. Firings are important in this film about power; they make up several of the strongest scenes. Fitzgerald seems to have been very impressed by Thalberg-Stahr's decisive, sadistic elegance on such occasions, even when he was a member of the cast instead of the audience. While on the MGM payroll, Fitzgerald had managed to get obstreperously smashed at a party given by Thalberg and his wife, Norma Shearer. The response was a one-two punch. Punch one was a telegram the next day from Norma: I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE OF THE MOST AGREEABLE PERSONS AT OUR TEA. Punch two came a few days later on a pink slip.

And yet—"don't give the impression these are bad people," Fitzgerald instructed himself in his notes. He wanted his tycoon an artist *malgré lui* to animate a "tragic" vision with which he identified, but which neither the book nor the film, for different reasons, makes real. *The Last Tycoon* is a book about a dying man by a dying man. It is striking and sad to discover in their biographies that both Thalberg and Fitzgerald, with their bad hearts, lay awake all night coughing, that both Norma Shearer and Sheila Graham were often up several times before dawn helping to change the sheets soaked through with sweat. "There are no second acts in American lives," Fitzgerald wrote in the book about himself and Thalberg. He saw in the two of them a romantic brotherhood, the complementary artist and tycoon of an American moment that had passed.

Fitzgerald was dead before anything like the "tragedy" implicit in this sentimental but potentially powerful idea could be worked out in his manuscript,

and one can only guess at the confluence of power and sex, art and dying, he had in mind. As for the film, Kazan has replaced its "tragedy" with little more than a nostalgic period style, with the result that the film loses its grip on its own obsession. Fitzgerald's fix on the tycoon's energy—on a vision of a winner losing—gives way to more misty and incomplete satisfactions. Yet it somehow works in a misty, incomplete way. Art Deco, the style in question, is of course the most overworked item in current chichi, but Kazan manages to focus on its rightness. It is perhaps the one general visual style that Hollywood can call its own, and it runs through Kazan's film in a very satisfactory way. Unless I'm much mistaken, even the film's editing—obsessed with parallels—mimics the style, and De Niro himself, with his wonderfully subtle and living portrayal of a profile, has created the first hero of the Art Deco revival.

That's no tragic hero, but I don't complain. Fitzgerald's fragmented, romantic sensibility is actually not all that badly served by the short, flashing, stylish take. On careful examination, it's revealing to see how much of *The Great Gatsby* (the novel) consists of the perfect integration of mere flashes of perception, mere moments. Perhaps it was this dimension of his art that made Fitzgerald's interest in movies—in "making pictures"—more genuine than would have been possible for, say, Faulkner, his sometime colleague on writer's row. One leaves *The Last Tycoon* remembering not a tragedy but an image, and there is more than a little satisfaction in seeing De Niro capture that image and redeem the romance of power Fitzgerald was moving toward. De Niro becomes the tycoon who founded the Hollywood that rejected Fitzgerald and two generations later made De Niro himself a star. The image in the screen is of a young Brooklyn street fighter turned gentlemanly but ruthless ruler of his kingdom—"a round-shouldered young man" as Fitzgerald describes him, "with a beaked nose and soft brown eyes in a sensitive face." I suspect what we see in De Niro is very like what Fitzgerald saw in his imagination, a figure walking through a hall of mirrors with the authority of a tycoon and a slender, dying dignity.



# ADRIFT AMONG IMAGES

A review of *Einstein on the Beach*

by F. Joseph Spieler

LATE LAST FALL, to the accompaniment of a loud and sustained media fanfare, New York was presented with the American premiere of *Einstein on the Beach*, an "opera in four acts" by Robert Wilson and Philip Glass. Advance publicity and newspaper reports said the work had been enthusiastically received in France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Belgium, Germany, and Holland. But though *Einstein* became the media's cultural darling of the season, with negotiations reported to present it in Washington, D.C., California, and Texas, little was written that came to grips with the opera itself. There were, instead, long stories on its technical complexities, with paeans to the crew at the New York Metropolitan Opera House and to the Wilson-Glass troupe for its physical endurance and mnemonic ability in staging the five-hour production (a shorter Wilson epic, one of his previous efforts, took twelve hours to perform).

After the first performance, critics were at pains to say that "What is it about?" was the one question that could not be asked about *Einstein*. To ask it ensured one's remaining outside the terms of the experience, of being, some implied, a cultural hick.

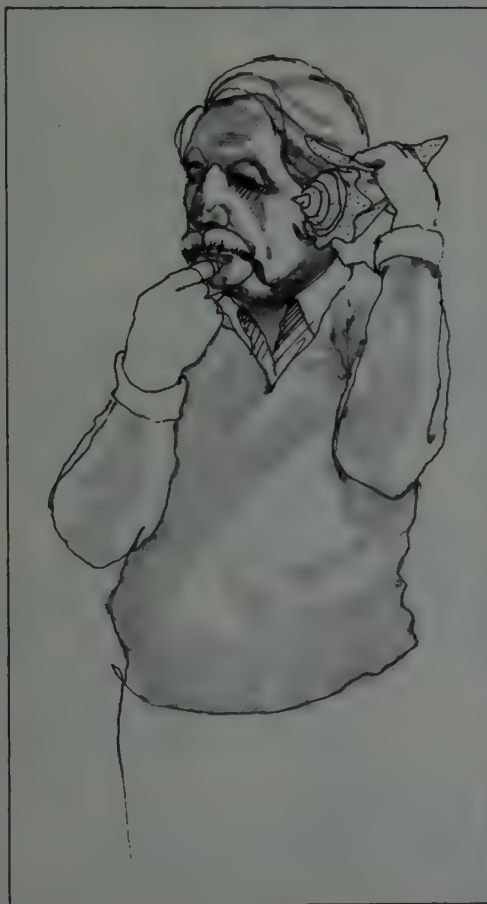
A little puzzled, we went to the second performance. According to the program notes, the opera was conceived by Robert Wilson and composer Philip Glass, with choreography by Andrew DeGroat. Wilson directed and designed the sets and Glass wrote the music and lyrics. The opera has nine scenes in four acts. There are also five of what Wilson and Glass call "knee plays." Two are used to open and close the work, three hinge the acts. The knee plays use

two actors who continuously repeat phrases and gestures to the accompaniment of a droning electronic organ. The effect, similar to staring at a closed loop of recorded videotape, is to lull the audience and wear down its expectations. There is then some comfort, as well as occasional change, in Glass's heavily amplified score. The music is constructed, not of melody or atonality, but of repeated bits of musical matter, as one might form a geometric shape with a typewriter by repeatedly typing a single letter, or series of letters, to a required pattern.

The title *Einstein on the Beach* has no literal meaning. Images of Albert Einstein fill the work, but the closest

we come to being "on the beach" is a conch shell that appears on stage right in several scenes. At one point an actress lifts it to her ear; it is up to us to guess what she may have heard. Some critics thought the title referred to a civilization on the brink (as in Nevil Shute's *On the Beach*), or to Einstein's love for sailing. There is no plot or action in the sense of traditional theater or opera. Instead, we are given a number of visual ideas or, more accurately, notions that are taken, often obscurely, from Einstein's life and the effects his work had on the world. Some of the notions are obvious; others assume a more than passing knowledge of the scientist. In any event, none is explained, and you just have to try and catch them as they go by. These references include Einstein's love for fiddling on the violin, for steam engines (a steam locomotive and a train are among the principal sets in the first two acts), his theoretical contribution to the atomic bomb and to space travel, and his exercise of pure reason. All these lead to the last scene, in which flashing lights, violent dancing, and loud, churning music hint at some sort of cosmic cataclysm set inside a space machine.

Even this simple list, however, implies a specificity to the opera which it lacks. For instance, the longest visual reference in *Einstein* to his theoretical work is in act four: a high rectangular building on an empty plain, seen from its narrow front, but slightly angled to give an idea of its depth. Near the top of the building is a window and through it we see a man, his back to us. His right arm describes ceaseless writing motions on an imaginary surface in front of him. A crowd gathers slowly at the front of the building and spends



Stanley Stark

F. Joseph Spieler is an editor and critic.



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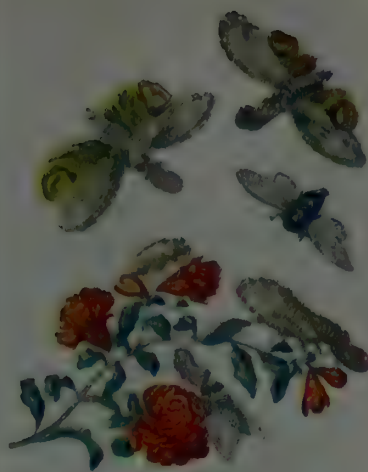
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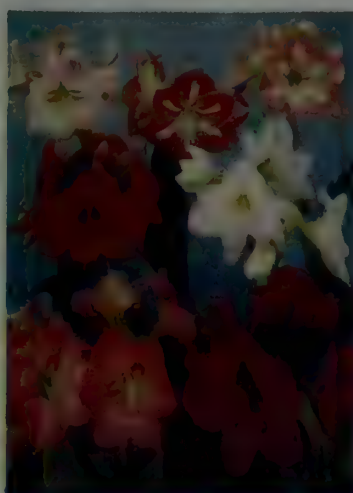
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its time looking up at the window. The first to arrive is a child on a skateboard; as the crowd wanders off, he is the last to leave. The scene ends as it begins, a building set on a lonely plain; through a high window we see a man, his right arm in motion. We assume the man is Einstein. Is the building Science? Is he, in his furious scribbling, working out formulas that will save—or destroy—mankind? Why does the building look more like a prison than a scientific institute? Are scientists prisoners? Whose? The silent people who gather below—are they prisoners of Science? Are they kept away from Science? (The building is massive, it has no door that we can see, the scientist inside is too high to reach.) One wants to know more, but feels embarrassed to ask.

**W**ILSON'S BACKGROUND as a painter is clear in *Einstein*. His sets are surrealistic, his predominant colors muted grays and reds, though one also remembers yellows and greens. The play seems to have any number of visual references. The scene inside the space machine could be based on Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*; an entire scene is given over to a pillar of light (in an earlier scene it was a bed) that rises slowly from the floor until it disappears into space, like the monolith in Kubrick's *2001*. There are allusions in the sets to Max Ernst and Giorgio de Chirico. Indeed, the foreboding quality of the Einstein building left a more lasting memory than the action in and outside it.

Another set is of a locomotive that creeps—in starts, stops, and reverses—onto stage left, while on stage right a young boy launches paper airplanes from the top of a gantry. An even more enigmatic one is the last car of a train (green and yellow) that recedes slowly backstage. Behind the window of the interconnecting door, a man and a woman sit facing each other for some time before she draws a gun and points it at him, ending the scene. Other sets are a courtroom, in chrome and white, that becomes a jail, complete with a spoken reference to Patty Hearst; a white bed that becomes the ascending pillar of light; a field of dancers above whom a circular “space machine” (it looks like a tabletop humidifier) moves on a gen-

tle diagonal; an enormous grid, filled with frenzied people and flashing lights—the apocalyptic event inside the space machine.

Glass's music is not difficult to understand, and is often interesting, if terribly loud. (“My main approach,” he writes in a program note, “has been to link harmonic structure directly to rhythmic structure, using the latter as a base.... Melodic material is for the most part a function, or result, of the harmony.”) The music, built around sequential tones, is accompanied by lyrics that use, instead of words, numbers (“one-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three; one-two-three-four, one-two-three-four, one-two-three-four,” et cetera) or *solfège* syllables (“do-re-mi”). The score, though no musical revelation, is far more concrete an experience than Wilson's drama, a result of its spare nonmelodic concept.

*Einstein on the Beach* adds up to distinctly less than the sum of its parts. One senses an innocent humanism at work here. From the dancing in the two “field” (space machine) scenes, one could gather that Wilson would like the human race to survive. It is a nice sentiment, but it isn't developed, and repetition flattens it to a veneer.

One possible thread through the opera is a figure made up as Einstein (as is, at times, the entire cast). He appears in several scenes sitting on a raised chair between the orchestra and stage and fiddles—continuously, loudly, lamentingly. He has neither facial expressions nor lines to speak. In a most unclarifying note, Glass writes: “His playing position... offers a clue to his role. We see him, then, perhaps as Einstein himself, or simply as a witness to the stage events, but in any case, as a musical touchstone to the work as a whole.”

All the elements of our universe are somehow connected, this opera seems to say—Einstein—trains—assassinations—Patty Hearst—space travel—but if our universe is to survive, we must first learn to love. There's nothing wrong with that, but without examination, development, without a hint of dialectic, it has all the force of a nice pop song—“All You Need Is Love,” by the Beatles, comes to mind. As such, *Einstein* doesn't begin to accommodate the epic scale of a five-hour opera.

Anything can be art, if only because people calling themselves artists have

done all sorts of things and called them art, and sooner or later critics and the marketplace have responded to them as art. *Einstein* is art, but a quite limited art of static visual images put to motion, not dissimilar from choosing a series of interesting and pretty postcards and moving them, in accompaniment to music, back and forth in front of one's eyes.

Almost all the New York critics took *Einstein* to their hearts, even if they didn't know what to make of it. Mel Gussow in the *Times*, writing about the opera as theater, came to the end of his review still searching for a definition: “‘Einstein on the Beach’ itself seems less a play or an opera than an organism with its own pulsating heartbeat.” A reviewer for the *Soho Weekly News* mastered the event by writing that “*Einstein on the Beach* answers all questions asked of it by showing us how ridiculous questions are.” Clive Barnes, perhaps the most generous of New York's establishment critics, took note in the *Times* of the opera's boredom, but rationalized it by quoting Logan Pearsall Smith, a nineteenth-century essayist who said that boredom,







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## MUSIC

taken to its ultimate, becomes a sort of art. "You will never forget it," Barbra wrote, "even if you hate it. Which is a most rare attribute to a work of art. Nowadays."

As it happens, I have forgotten much of *Einstein*, and I neither hated it nor loved it. To see *Einstein* is to be invited for dinner. You arrive. The china, the silverware, the flowers are beautiful. You sit down. It is only after some time has passed that the intentions of the host become clear: you were to have brought your own food.

## Recommended Recordings

*Lohengrin* (Philips 6747 241). J. Thomas as Lohengrin, Anja Silja as Elsa, Ramón Vinay as Telramund, and Erich Varnáy as Ortrud, conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch. Recorded live at the Bayreuth Festival in 1962. A first-rate recording, harmonious, balanced, pleasingly unspectacular. The live performance comes through clearly and adds a "presence" that studio recordings simply can't match.

*Songs by Stephen Foster, Volume 1* (Nonesuch H-71333). With Janice Gaetani, Leslie Guinn, Gilbert Kalish and the Camerata Chorus of Washington. Songs of love, songs of patriotism, songs of America, sung by marvelous voices accompanied by original nineteenth-century instruments. A lovely recording.

*Piano Etudes by Bartók, Busoni, Messiaen, Stravinsky* (Nonesuch H-71334). Paul Jacobs plays "Sechs kurze Stücke zur Pflege des polyphonen Spiels" by Busoni, "Four Etudes" (Opus 7) by Stravinsky, "Three Etudes" (Opus 10) by Bartók, and "Quatre Études rythmiques" by Messiaen. Strong playing of piano music of sharply differing emotionality. Not only fascinating to the ear, but an education in the music of the first half of this century.

*César Franck: Symphony in D Minor* (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 707). Daniel Barenboim conducts the Paris Orchestra in a powerful realization of this haunting symphony, with its alternating Mahlerian themes of darkness, doubt, and triumph. The orchestral sounds especially sonorous and vivid on this disc, and Barenboim's conducting is sure and controlled.



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# THE FOURTH ESTATE

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## WHISPERINGS IN THE PRESS GALLERY

In which it is argued that the balcony has become the pit

by Peter H. Schuck

**L**ONG AGO Congress established a press gallery to facilitate coverage of its proceedings. Over time this evolved into four separate galleries for the daily press, the periodical press, radio and TV correspondents, and press photographers. Unlike the public galleries, which strictly forbid spectators to take notes and rotate visitors in and out, the press galleries are the home away from home of the Congressional correspondent. They are equipped with telephones, typewriters, and complimentary copies of the *Congressional Record*, and are staffed by attendants who take messages and keep up with the day's proceedings. More important, the press galleries provide special access to the floor and assure admission to the daily on-the-record press conferences held by the leadership of both chambers. Gallery membership also confers

*Peter H. Schuck, an attorney, is the director of the Washington office of Consumers Union and author of The Judiciary Committees. He represented Consumers Union in the events described in this article.*

a certain journalistic cachet, making it easier to obtain other press privileges; for example, such membership normally assures credentials for White House press conferences.

The Periodical Press Galleries are run by the Periodical Correspondents' Association, a large group of journalists working for publications which have been admitted to the galleries. Through its executive committee, composed of senior Congressional correspondents from *Time*, *Newsweek*, and several other leading publications, the association administers the galleries, nominally under the supervision and control of the Speaker of the House and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

Until recently the gallery rules, first approved by Congress in the mid-nineteenth century, provided that a periodical could be admitted only if it was "published for profit and supported chiefly by advertising, and owned and operated independently of any industry, business, association or institution." The purpose of the rules was to pro-

tect members of Congress from being importuned by special-interest lobbyists disguised as journalists, a real problem in the early 1800s, when journalists sat on the floor of the Capitol, but one which apparently vanished after special galleries were built above the chamber in the 1850s. However, the rules, which assumed that nonprofit organizations could not possibly engage in bona fide journalism, have remained essentially unchanged.

**S**cience IS A well-known and prestigious periodical, the third most widely read publication among faculty members at major universities (after the *New York Times* and *Time*). It is published by a nonprofit organization, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and therefore ineligible under the rules for admission into the galleries. Nevertheless, in the mid-Sixties a lenient galleries administrator issued to *Science's* Capitol Hill reporter, Luther Carter, a temporary pass, and

In which it is argued that the balcony has remained true to itself

by Neil MacNeil

**T**HE AUTHOR OF the preceding article has told a remarkable tale of what he views as an unholy alliance between powerful leaders of Congress and a small band of Congressional correspondents to suppress the constitutional rights of

*Neil MacNeil is chief Congressional correspondent for Time and a regular panelist on the PBS program Washington Week in Review.*

certain publishers and reporters. He protests that by a trick of legal finesse my colleagues and I have escaped culpability for our crimes.

Peter Schuck and I agree on little, but I agree with him that this case was a matter of great moment to Congress, the nation's press, and the Washington lobbyists. What was at hazard was nothing less than the integrity of the Congressional press corps and the ability

of Congress to control access by lobbyists to its members.

Schuck's title at Consumers Union, "Washington director," has a special meaning in the nation's capital, for it is frequently used as a polite euphemism for "chief lobbyist." It is so in Schuck's case, and his suit challenged that section of our galleries' rules which excludes lobbying organizations from mem- (Continued on page 116)



## THE FOURTH ESTATE

that pass was routinely renewed for years. In 1971 Carter left *Science* to write a book on land-use and growth problems in Florida. After returning in early 1973 to resume his duties at *Science*, Carter requested that his gallery privileges be restored. It seemed a routine matter, but Carter's request was quickly denied, without explanation. From a thoroughly respectable publication with full access to the galleries, *Science* was suddenly transformed into a journalistic pariah not fit to enter the galleries' precincts.

Carter soon discovered what lay behind the Periodical Correspondents' Association's volte-face. The association, he learned, had excluded numerous periodicals in the past, all with impunity. These included such substantial publications as *The Village Voice* (allegedly because it was believed to be an "underground" publication), the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Consumer Reports*, the highly regarded, 2 million-subscriber monthly published by Consumers Union, and a number of Washington-based newsletters reporting on governmental affairs and excluded from the galleries because they were sustained by subscriptions rather than by advertising. The publishers of some of these newsletters had retained a lawyer and, in exasperation, threatened suit.

After protracted negotiations, the newsletters finally succeeded in gaining entry to the inner sanctum by having the rules amended to permit admission of subscription-financed periodicals. Their admission, however, was not unanimous. Neil MacNeil, *Time*'s Congressional correspondent and a leader of the association's executive committee, was so piqued by the rules change and so scornful of the committee's acquiescence that he refused to attend the meeting at which it was approved: "I did not wish to seem to condone this action by my presence," he wrote in a letter of protest. "The Committee has surrendered under simple coercion."

MacNeil's philippic seemed to have stiffened the galleries' resistance to any further enlargement of the fraternity that might admit *Consumer Reports*, which had also threatened legal action. *Consumer Reports*, like *Science*, is published by a nonprofit institution and therefore, according to the association, could not be an "independent" publication. Indeed, Consumers Union was, as

the association put it, "a self-proclaimed advocate of consumer interests" and could not properly share the galleries with true journalists. MacNeil later explained his position in a letter to Sen. Edward Kennedy: "To date no one has come up with any change of rules which would satisfy the Congress's long determination to exclude from press accreditation any individual or organization engaged in lobbying the Congress and still allow accreditation of organizations such as *Science* magazine." After almost nine months of fruitless negotiations, Consumers Union decided to file suit.

In its action, Consumers Union noted that a publication of any size is published by a legally distinct corporation, and that Consumers Union, as a matter of long-standing policy, had scrupulously avoided any lobbying activity whatsoever. It also pointed out that if the association were truly concerned about journalists affiliated with lobbying organizations, it could begin with its own executive committee, which was dominated by a reporter (MacNeil of *Time*) for a periodical owned by a large corporate conglomerate with substantial nonpublishing interests. Indeed, investigation revealed that Time Inc. employed a registered lobbyist to promote its corporate interests on the Hill, and that the galleries' membership list swarmed with special-interest publications. These included such journalistic stalwarts as *Modern Tire Dealer*, *National Timber Industry*, *Automotive News*, *Baking Industry Magazine*, *Drug Topics and Drug Trade News*, *Food Processing and Marketing*, *Leather and Shoes Magazine*, and *Investment Dealer's Digest*, to name just a few. Consumers Union also showed that the other Congressional press galleries had admitted not only consumer publications but even Communist-bloc news agencies, requiring only that they refrain from lobbying.

CONSUMERS UNION, which had felt the heavy hand of the censor years earlier when postal authorities tried to seize copies of an issue describing a pamphlet on contraceptives, argued in court that the correspondents, by arbitrarily excluding *Consumer Reports* while accrediting numerous industry organs, had violated its First Amendment rights

to equal access to Congressional news as well as its right to equal protection of the laws. In October 1973, Judge Gerhard Gesell of the Federal District Court of Washington ruled in Consumers Union's favor, declaring the galleries' rule unconstitutional.

*There should be no glossing over what this record discloses. Under a broad, generalized congressional delegation, authority has been given certain newsmen to prevent other newsmen from having access to news of vital consequence to the public. As a result, a group of established periodical correspondents have undertaken to implement arbitrary and unnecessary regulations with a view to excluding from news sources representatives of publications whose ownership or ideas they consider objectionable.*

*The situation disclosed by this undisputed record flouts the First Amendment. It matters not that elements of the press as well as Congress itself appear to have been the instruments for denial of constitutional rights in this instance, for those rights limit the actions of legislative agents and instrumentalities as surely as those of Congress itself.*

Shortly before the court's decision, Luther Carter had submitted his gallery membership application once again, but had been requested by the executive committee to await the outcome of the Consumers Union case. He had graciously complied. When Judge Gesell issued his ruling, Carter was elated. But he soon learned that his frustrations, rather than ending, had only begun. Even temporary accreditation of *Science*, the executive committee insisted, might prejudice the association's legal position to appeal the decision, which would drag the case out for at least two more years. In the meanwhile, neither *Consumer Reports* nor *Science* could enter the galleries.

Mindful of Judge Gesell's emphatic decision, the correspondents decided to take a different tack on appeal. Citing a section of the Constitution providing that "the Senators and Representatives ... for any speech or debate in either House ... shall not be questioned in any other place," the association argued that, even assuming that it had violated the First Amendment, it was nevertheless immune from suit.



This argument seemed preposterous, mere clutching at straws. After all, "speech-or-debate clause" had been inserted into the Constitution merely to protect legislators from being harassed by litigious political adversaries, and to ensure robust, untrammelled debate and an unconstrained legislative process. The Supreme Court had carefully confined the immunity from suit strictly "legislative tasks" performed by members of Congress or their legislative aides; it had never been deemed to extend to a group of private citizens, much less one performing a task—accreditation of periodicals—so remote from the process of legislating. Indeed, the correspondents had not even bothered to raise the issue in the trial court. Judge Gesell, a jurist renowned for thoroughness, had considered the issue on his own initiative, but concluded that it was clearly inapplicable to the correspondents.)

To Consumers Union's astonishment, the appeals court ruled in July 1975 that the association was indeed immune from suit. It was not necessary to decide whether the correspondents had violated the First Amendment rights of Consumers Union, the court noted; because they were acting as agents of Congress in running the galleries, they were entitled to invoke the speech-or-debate clause immunity to shield themselves from any potential liability. When the Supreme Court declined to hear the case, the correspondents were free from further challenge.

SOME MEMBERS of Congress, however, were not at all pleased with the handiwork of their "agents." Back in 1974, when the *Consumers Union* case was still on appeal, Sen. Sam Ervin, R-Hill's acknowledged constitutional authority, had protested to his colleagues "the injustice being done to reputable journalists such as Mr. Carter," demanding that the galleries' rules be changed to prevent "further injury to legitimate newsgathering." After the Court of Appeals decision, several other members of Congress, including Senators Philip Hart of Michigan and Lee Metcalf of Montana, voiced similar concern and urged that the rules be revised, perhaps along the lines adopted by the other press galleries and first suggested by Luther

Carter and Consumers Union almost three years earlier—that is, by replacing the ambiguous requirements of "for profit" and "independent" ownership with a flat prohibition against lobbying activities by any accredited journalist.

When Sen. Howard Cannon, the chairman of the Rules Committee which nominally supervises the galleries (but in practice defers to the views of the executive committee) took up these and other Congressional letters of protest with the correspondents in October 1975, he was assured that the committee had established a subcommittee—chaired by Neil MacNeil himself—which would "study the rules to see if any revisions are warranted." Only later did Cannon learn that the subcommittee had been subsequently dissolved at MacNeil's request without ever having met formally, despite several attempts by one of its members, Mark Arnold of *The National Observer*, to get MacNeil to convene a meeting so that a report could be prepared. When Arnold urged a compromise rule change that would admit organizations with IRS-approved tax-exempt status in return for their agreeing not to lobby, MacNeil, defending the independent authority of Congress, put through a substitute resolution opposing any rule change that relied upon prior determinations by an executive branch agency.

Carter recently discussed the situation with Sam Shaffer of *Newsweek*, a member of the executive committee. Shaffer noted that the question of *Science's* exclusion was not closed, but that the galleries were waiting for someone to come up with an acceptable solution. Carter, ever tenacious, again suggested that instead of the committee attempting to evaluate applicants on the basis of its perception of their political orientation, all correspondents should be required to submit affidavits swearing that they would not engage in lobbying. Shaffer replied that such a requirement would be "demeaning." Carter pointed out that it was far more demeaning for *Science* to be barred from the galleries while Tass, the Soviet news agency, was admitted. Shaffer, growing impatient, denounced Carter for "pestering" the galleries for the past three years.

There the matter rests. *Science* and *Consumer Reports* remain exiles from

the galleries, along with other reputable periodicals. The illegality of the correspondents' exclusion of them continues without remedy. This injustice was underscored by a federal court decision in July 1976 ruling unconstitutional the refusal of Ron Ziegler and the Secret Service "for security reasons" to accredit Robert Sherrill of *The Nation* for admission to White House press conferences. The court, noting that the Congressional immunity from suit was not available to the White House, relied heavily on Judge Gesell's views on the First Amendment issues in the *Consumers Union* case.

The galleries controversy contains many disturbing ironies. If any group should be our most passionate defender of the First Amendment, it should be the correspondents who report on the exercise of political power. Yet some of the correspondents who run the galleries apparently regard the First Amendment as some men regard a mistress—someone to be embraced with ardor when one needs a refuge and discarded when she becomes a nuisance.

For correspondents to lend their energies to an official allocation of journalistic privileges according to vague, invidious criteria, is to relinquish that remoteness from power that justifies a free press. That professional writers, enjoying access to the Justice Department's lawyers, are unable to draft a rule that can fairly distinguish between journalists whose organizations lobby and those whose organizations do not, suggests a notable want of imagination and of will.

The vitality of a free press depends upon journalists maintaining their independence from friendly politicians as well as hostile ones. Yet some of the galleries' leadership has chosen, in Judge Gesell's words, to "flout the First Amendment" and then, when pursued by the law, to hide behind the skirts of the same Congress that they, as journalists, are supposed to investigate and chronicle at arm's length. They have taken upon themselves the awesome power to decide (in Sam Shaffer's words to Senator Cannon) that the work of *Science*, and presumably *Consumer Reports* and many others as well "falls outside the function of the 'Press' as an American institution." If these are the friends of the First Amendment, God save it from its enemies. ■■■■



(Continued from page 112) bership: "owned and operated independently of any industry, business, association or institution." Those who judge between his account and mine should know that his was written by a lobbyist as skilled as any in that line of work.

I am aware that Schuck has repeatedly denied that he or his organization lobby either Congress or federal agencies, a not unusual disclaimer by lobbyists. He has admitted, however, because he had to, that he regularly testifies before Congressional committees and intervenes before the government's regulatory agencies. That is exactly what lobbyists do. He once claimed that his organization's purposes were "purer" than those of some already accredited to the press galleries, but he abandoned that argument when, presumably, he realized that the rules prohibiting lobbyists do not differentiate between "pure" and "impure" lobbies. He then argued that he advocated only general interests, not "special" interests, but the rules are not concerned with that difference either. Schuck further argued that when he testifies he does so only on invitation. Everybody in political Washington knows that no one testifies before a Congressional committee without invitation, even when that invitation takes the form of a subpoena. Besides, Schuck has no trouble getting invitations. To cite just one of his connections, Michael Pertschuk, chief counsel of the Senate Commerce Committee, a key committee on consumer legislation, serves on Schuck's board of directors.

There is, of course, nothing inherently wrong about lobbying, even though most lobbyists shrink from describing themselves by that name and relatively few feel compelled to register under the loosely drawn Lobbying Act of 1946. The right to lobby is guaranteed by the constitutional right of petition, and some of Washington's lobbyists have proved themselves immensely helpful to Congress. They often provide valuable information and insights, as I am sure Schuck does when he testifies. It is wrong, however, for lobbyists to pose as journalists—wrong for the press, wrong for Congress, wrong for the lobbyists themselves. And that is why the rules of all Congressional press galleries were written as they were.

SCHUCK STATES THAT the purpose of the rules was to protect members of Congress from "special-interest" lobbyists, and he would have you believe that although this was a real problem in the early 1800s, it apparently vanished when the reporters were given their own seats upstairs in the 1850s. An ingenious argument, that. In fact, the rules were written as much to protect the legitimate press corps. Congress did have problems before 1850, primarily from claims agents, but professional lobbyists appeared in Washington only when Congress began voting huge subsidies to railroads, steamship lines, and other industries in the later part of the nineteenth century. For a price, this new man, the lobbyist, would work to pass or defeat any bill, an effort that sometimes included bribing Congressmen. Lobbyists saw the intimacy reporters enjoyed with the Congressmen, and some finagled press credentials for themselves or hired venal reporters. By the 1870s, the Capitol was overrun with lobbyists and claims agents. In 1875, in one notorious instance, four reporters were paid fees ranging from \$5,000 to \$30,000 for a lobbying scheme. The corruption of Congress and its press corps had become a national scandal.

The Senate and the House of Representatives repeatedly tried to write protective regulations, for their members knew, as Will Rogers later said, that no Congressman ever corrupted himself. They tried to keep claims agents and lobbyists at a safe distance, but they failed. There were honest and reputable reporters covering Congress in those years, and they were appalled by the "journalistic jobbers" in their midst "bleeding corporations and getting money easily from divers lobbying schemes," as one of them put it. On November 5, 1877, a group of them met with Speaker of the House Sam Randall and asked for the power to cleanse their own membership. Randall authorized them to form a committee to regulate the press galleries under new rules. They were charged with protecting the members of Congress, but, more important for them, with protecting the integrity of the press corps. Their assignment has never been successfully completed, and it never can be, for by the very nature of the legislative process the temptations do

not vanish, despite Schuck's happy conclusion to the contrary.

When the Periodical Press Galleries were created in 1941, a special problem arose because many organized lobbies published periodicals, ranging from house organs to national magazines. That was why the special language was needed on ownership of periodicals, on the theory that he who pays the piper calls the tune. Schuck lists, as he did in court, what he called "special-interest" publications accredited to our galleries as though they were admitted because they serve special interests. He knows they qualify because they are owned and operated independent of any potential lobby. Moreover, Schuck neglected to mention the powerful lobbies excluded from our galleries by the very words he sought to eliminate: the National Rifle Association, the American Medical Association, the AFL-CIO, the National Association of Manufacturers. All publish periodicals, as do hundreds of other lobbies operating in Washington.

Schuck chose to mix his case with two other questions then before our executive committee, the accreditation of *Science* magazine and a request to change the rules to qualify newsletters. All three posed distinctly different questions, and, of course, we dealt with them differently. In the case of the newsletters, the committee's decision was sudden and made under the threat of a lawsuit. I wanted my colleagues to consider some alternatives, but they would brook no delay.

Schuck saw how the executive committee surrendered before the newsletters' threat; he was at the same meeting arguing for the admission of *Consumer Reports*. What worked for them might work for him: he made his own threat as he called it, to sue. He credits me with stiffening my colleagues' resistance. I doubt that. No one questioned the journalistic legitimacy of the newsletters. The only question was how, not whether, they should be accredited. I believe they were entitled to their own galleries and volunteered to help them get them. Schuck's challenge went to the very heart of the lobbyist question, and my colleagues knew it. We voted unanimously against *Consumer Reports*. Schuck then appealed to the Speaker of the House and the Senate Rules Committee. The Speaker ignored his appeal and the Senate committee met, con-



ered his arguments, and then ratified  
r decision. Schuck appealed to both  
cause they write the rules for our gal-  
ies. We enforce their rules, but we  
ve no power to change them, only  
make suggestions.

Schuck sued us, not the Speaker or  
e Senate committee. This was shrewd,  
r had he sued them, as he should  
ve, his case would have received  
ant hearing in any court, as he knew.  
confess I paid no attention to the  
; neither did most of my colleagues.  
nce it involved Congress, the U.S.  
torney's Office provided defense  
ounsel, and we assumed it was in  
mpetent hands. We also assumed that  
e language Schuck questioned was  
lidly drafted under Congress's con-  
stitutional authority to write its own  
les and its common-law powers to  
tect itself. Not until Judge Gesell  
nded down his decision did we dis-  
ver the seriousness of Schuck's suit:  
esell agreed with him and declared  
e constitutional that phrase in our  
les meant to exclude lobbyists from  
r midst.

READ THE DECISION with disbel-  
ief and only belatedly the tran-  
scription of the hearing on which  
it was based. I promptly tele-  
oned the U.S. Attorney's Office to  
k for a rehearing of the case. I got  
ort shrift. The Attorney's Office had  
interest, and an official there ex-  
ained why. They knew Judge Gesell  
ll, he said, and they knew that Ge-  
l, a judge with a flair for headlines,  
nted a "freedom-of-the-press" case  
r his career portfolio. The "facts" did  
t matter, I was told. As a journalist, I  
as not unfamiliar with cynicism in  
blic office, but I had no idea it ran  
deeply in the legal community. Only  
er did I discover that the U.S. At-  
ney's Office was so uninterested in  
is case that it had been routinely as-  
igned to a young lawyer fresh from  
w school. A case involving the con-  
stitutional powers of Congress and the  
egrity of the Washington press corps  
d been argued by a defense attorney  
o had never before tried a case in  
urt!

At the hearing, the defense attorney  
d failed even to raise the question  
the court's jurisdiction, the obvious  
reshold question in a constitutional  
se, and, when it was raised by the

judge, confessed he was taken "some-  
what by surprise." He admitted he  
found the galleries' rules "puzzling,"  
and in his helplessness he was simply  
overrun by Schuck and Gesell. Schuck  
discovered that he could say without  
protest whatever he wanted. He stressed  
that we voted against *Consumer Reports*  
because of its "advocacy" of consumers'  
interests and thereby led the judge to  
believe we had set ourselves up as cen-  
sors. Gesell actually suggested from the  
bench that under Congress's auspices  
we had established a "private club"  
and decided among ourselves who  
should be members. "The prohibition  
is one addressed to ideas," Gesell said,  
"unless I have missed something here."  
He had missed something. Defense  
counsel did not know what, and Schuck,  
understandably, did not tell him. Ge-  
sell concluded at last that we had ex-  
cluded the magazine "because of their  
ideas." He had not a shred of evidence.  
He had not heard a single witness. Re-  
nowned for his thoroughness, indeed!

Gesell's decision was unprecedented:  
never before had a court struck down  
an internal rule of Congress. He went  
further: "The Constitution requires  
that Congressional press galleries re-  
main available to all members of the  
working press, regardless of their af-  
filiation." That dictum made almost  
every lobbyist in town eligible, and in  
the next few days we received a flood  
of applications from them. At my urgent  
request, the Speaker and the Chair-  
man of the Senate Rules Committee  
wrote to the acting Attorney General  
on behalf of our committee, in effect  
demanding a top-flight attorney for the  
appeal. The Justice Department react-  
ed quickly, assigning to the case one  
of its most experienced lawyers, Neil  
Koslowe.

Schuck says he was astonished at the  
appeals court's decision. No one else  
was. In fact, he lost the case before  
that court ever met. In pre-hearing  
briefs, Koslowe destroyed his argu-  
ments, and he never had a chance in  
the hearing. The court found that our  
rules were reasonable and legally valid  
and stated that we "were acting in  
good faith" in carrying them out un-  
der a proper mandate from Congress.  
We won on the merits, not on mere  
technicalities, and we won by a unan-  
imous decision of the three-judge court,  
a decision that was confirmed and rat-  
ified by the Supreme Court.

WITH THE *Consumer Re-*  
*ports* case won, I sug-  
gested that our commit-  
tee initiate a study to  
examine whether our rules might be  
changed to remove any inequities. We  
had in mind the application of *Science*,  
a magazine technically disqualified but  
one whose sponsors did not lobby Con-  
gress. Because we believed the rules  
worked an undue hardship on *Science*,  
for some years we had afforded its re-  
porter, Luther Carter, the "courtesies"  
of our galleries—that is, use of such  
facilities as we have. We had done the  
same with other reporters in like cir-  
cumstances from time to time, on the  
theory that we should try to do what  
we could to assist fellow journalists  
when we could. After Gesell's decision,  
on advice of counsel, we withdrew our  
offer to Carter on the grounds that  
Schuck might be able to use it against  
us in court. After the Supreme Court  
decision, we renewed the offer to Car-  
ter, but he declined: he insisted on  
full accreditation or none.

All of us on the committee spent  
several months examining and discuss-  
ing various proposals for changes in the  
rules, but we could find none that would  
at the same time satisfy Congressional  
control of the rules, admit technically  
disqualified but bona fide reporters,  
and exclude lobbyist organizations. One  
member, Mark Arnold, had language  
he felt did the job, and I moved the  
dissolution of the rules subcommittee so  
that the full committee could consider  
his proposal. At a special meeting  
called for that purpose, Arnold's pro-  
posal was fully discussed, but finally  
rejected. The concept was flawed by  
its dependence on the Internal Re-  
venue Service, an executive agency, for  
definitions.

There is a ready solution for *Sci-*  
*ence*—the way Tass was handled years  
ago. Tass correspondents were admit-  
ted to the newspaper press galleries,  
not ours, even though not qualified un-  
der the rules, by direction of the Con-  
gressional leaders on the urgent plea  
of the State Department. The depart-  
ment's officials stated this would help  
lessen tensions with Russia and pre-  
vent Soviet retaliation on American re-  
porters in Moscow. The Speaker and  
the Senate Rules Committee have that  
authority over the press galleries. So  
far neither has chosen to use it on be-  
half of *Science* or its reporter.



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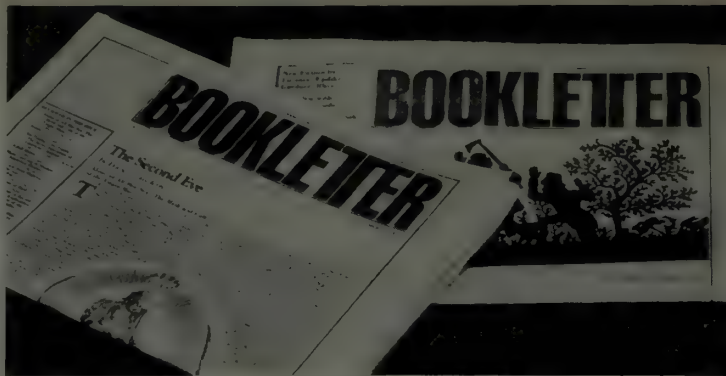
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# PUZZLE

## CRAZY QUILT

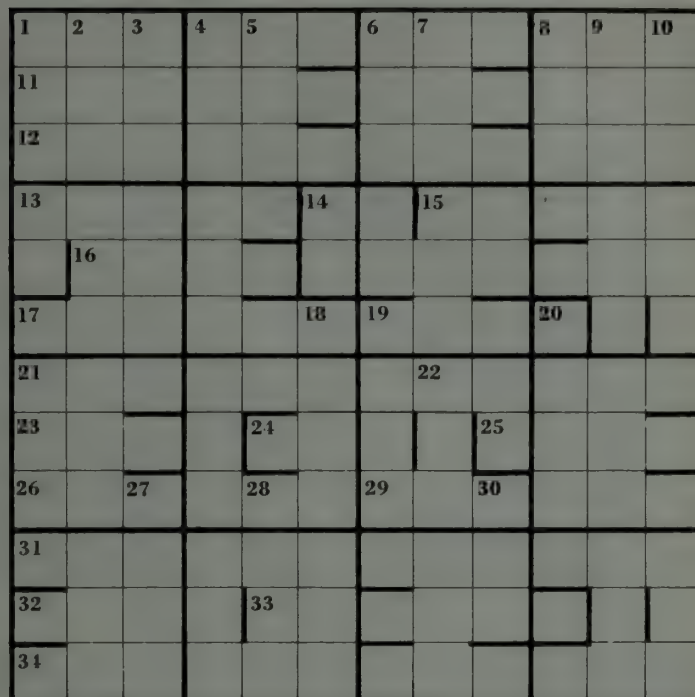
Richard Maltby, Jr. (with acknowledgments to Albipedi-  
the Listener)

**month's instructions:** This puzzle should delight 1 Across.  
out it differently, 1 Across might be another title for this  
le.

he clues are normal. The lights (i.e., answers to be en-  
d in the diagram) begin at their proper numbers and run  
zontally or vertically as usual. However, when a grid line  
ached (grid lines intersect the puzzle every three spaces),  
light may be displaced by one line (horizontal lights) or  
column (vertical lights) until a further grid line is  
hed, and so on until the end of the light. All lights are  
laced at least once.

lues 13A, 29A, and 34A are uncommon words; 34A is  
henated in *Funk and Wagnall's*, but is unhyphenated in  
mbers's *Dictionary*. As always, mental repunctuation of a  
is the key to its solution.

he solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 101.



### CLUES

#### ACROSS

Bad-tempered people thwart small plots (12)  
Languid condition Ko-Ko is never found in! (12)  
Guard loses head, makes full admission (5)  
Old ship is what makes tail go (6)  
Very little time in cunning surroundings, in a pleasant  
way (7)  
Debit accounts for French Cleaner! (5)  
Epic creator involved in give-and-take (11)  
Protested Sixties-style material (5)  
Not either the nurses or the Eskimos, for example (9)  
Ugly old woman embracing head of state, having inter-  
course—am I to ask a lot of questions (5-7)  
Fee for a black diva? You might find it here! (5, 3)  
Sound like returning reactionary type (4)  
Repeat part of the chorus (4)  
Steamer certainly carries this, which is fine (6)  
Visionary minister's talk, in short, is about Easter (4)  
Soft, aren't you, if you have children (6)

33. Move by trailer after dropping one dreadfully (8)  
34. Dull pedants (Drs.) study as if everything's obscure (10)  
(see instructions)

#### DOWN

1. Authorizing certificates for cancer seal distribution (10)  
2. Sounds from bands? (5)  
3. Top off most highly seasoned bird (7)  
4. Turned up drunk, it's holding permit for lethal weapons (9)  
5. To move through water in a kind of curve, look and be  
quiet (5)  
6. Doctor observed the skeleton (8)  
7. Guide hiding in trees (5)  
8. A way of thinking a greeting inside, and so on (5)  
9. Toughens up for bad weather conditions (6)  
10. Orderly sets calamity off (12)  
17. It's sad about that French magic act (7)  
18. Partied, dressed in stole (7)  
19. Once again lets sterner characters become shaken (7)  
20. Foolishly secreted in Yale inn (7)  
22. This sign, endlessly, has it put in confinement (6)  
27. Listen to sounds in this place (4)  
28. Mars upcoming health aids (4)  
30. Gets close to not starting—they have labyrinths in them (4)

### TEST RULES

l completed diagram with name and address to Crazy  
t, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York,  
. 10016. Entries must be received by March 10. Senders  
he first three correct solutions opened will receive a one-  
subscription to *Harper's Bookletter*. The solution will be  
ted in the April issue. Winners' names will be printed in

the May issue. Winners of the January puzzle, "New Direc-  
tions," are Fred and Anne Geldon, Bethesda, Maryland;  
Arthur Gordon, Montreal, Canada; Richard D. Wiegman,  
Omaha, Nebraska; F. Bygate, Cincinnati, Ohio; Joanne Red-  
lich, Athens, Ohio; and Beatrice Slotnick, Cambridge, Massa-  
chusetts. Six winners were chosen this month because of the  
unusual difficulty of the January puzzle (see solution page).



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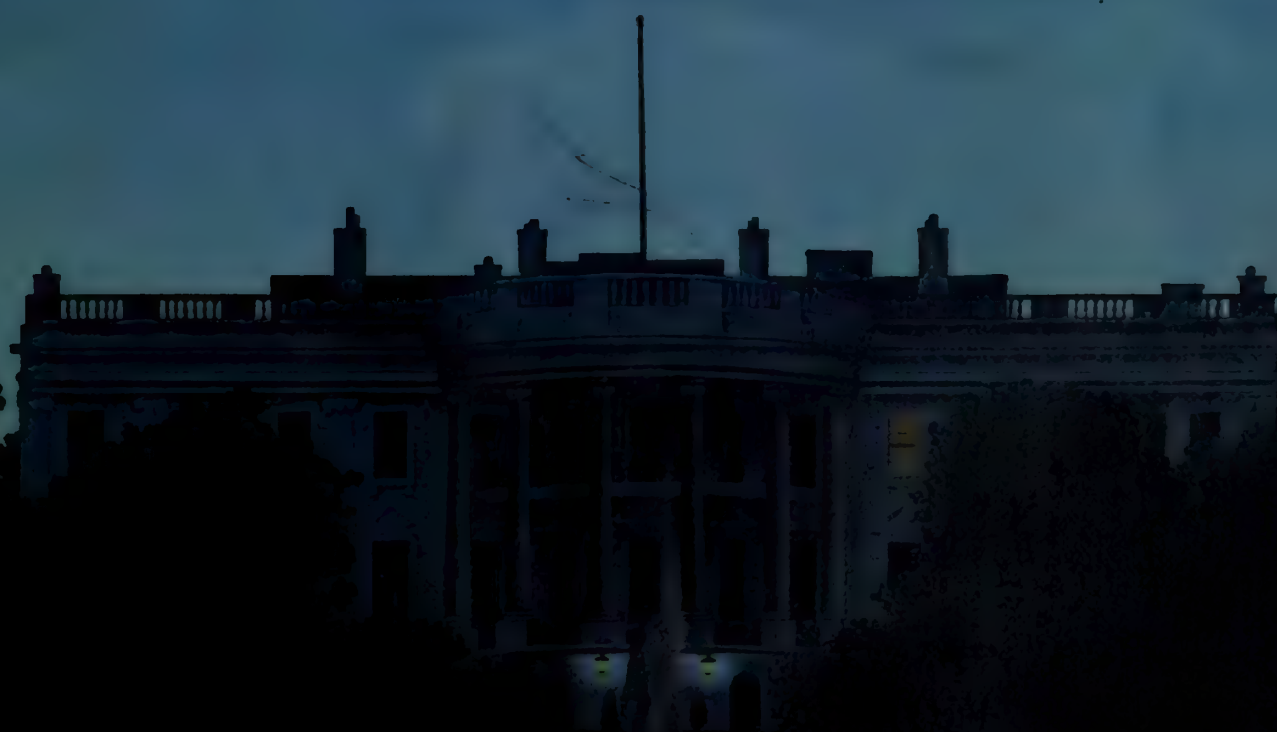
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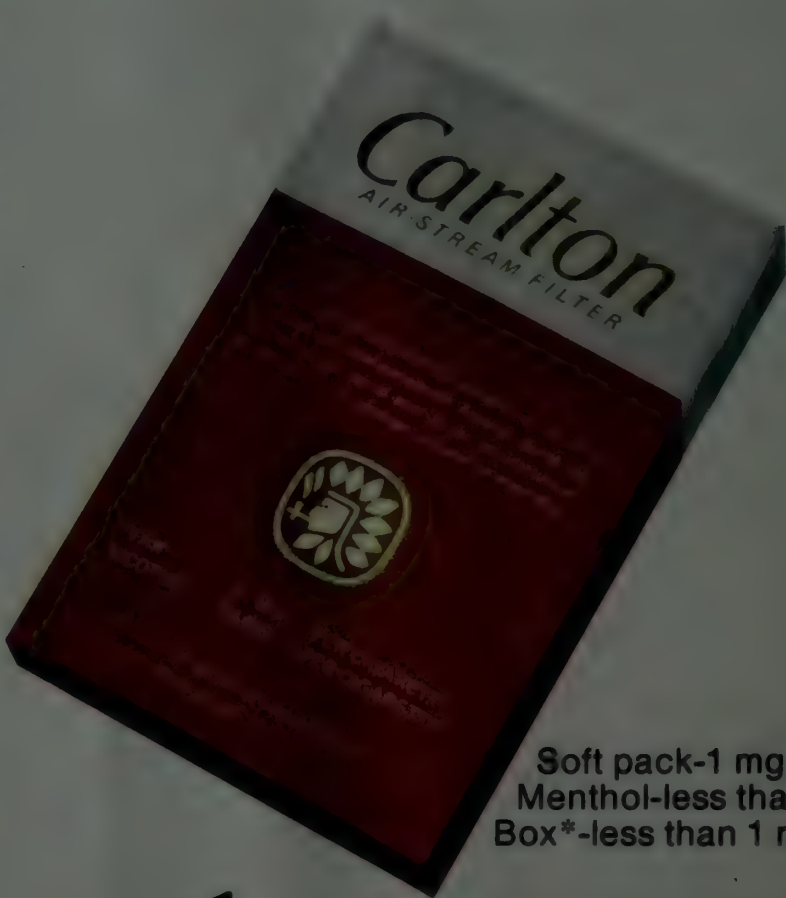
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	tar mg / cigarette	nicotine mg. / cigarette
Brand P Non-Filter	25	1.6
Brand C Non-Filter	23	1.4
Brand W	19	1.2
Brand W 100	19	1.2
Brand M	18	1.1
Brand S Menthol	18	1.2
Brand S Menthol 100	18	1.2
Brand BH 100	18	1.0
Brand M Box	17	1.0
Brand K Menthol	17	1.4

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	tar mg. / cigarette	nicotine mg. / cigarette
Brand P Box	15	0.8
Brand K Mild	14	0.9
Brand W Lights	13	0.9
Brand M Lights	13	0.8
Brand D	13	0.9
Brand D Menthol	11	0.8
Brand V Menthol	11	0.7
Brand V	10	0.7
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Brand M	8	0.5
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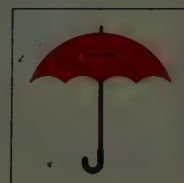
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**PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER:** James A. Alcott; **ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER:** Shirrel Rhoades; **CONTROLLER:** Louis A. Isidora; **PRODUCTION MANAGER:** Louis Seeger; **CIRCULATION MANAGER:** Toby Roux; **ASSISTANT CIRCULATION MANAGER:** Anita Casertano; **CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING:** Joanne Kingsley

Published monthly by Harper's Magazine Company, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, a division of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. John Cowles, Jr., Chairman; Otto A. Silha, President; Donald R. Dwight, Publisher; Charles W. Arnason, Secretary; William R. Beattie, Treasurer. Subscriptions: \$8.97 one year. Foreign except Canada and Pan America: \$1.50 per year additional. For advertising information contact Harper-Atlantic Sales, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Other offices in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Copyright © 1977 by the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. All rights reserved. The trademark *Harper's* is used by Harper's Magazine Company under license, and is a registered trademark owned by Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated. Printed in the U.S.A. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send Form 3579 to Harper's Magazine, 1255 Portland Place, Boulder, Colo. 80302



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# LETTERS

## First Amendment debate

In my article ["Whisperings in the Press Gallery," March], I showed that the journalists of the Periodical Press Galleries in Congress had, by refusing accreditation to periodicals published by nonprofit groups, trampled on the First Amendment rights of many of their colleagues in an arrogant and arbitrary fashion. Neil MacNeil's response confirms my point, while careering wildly between canard, error, insult, irrelevancy, and evasion.

First, the canards. The major premise of MacNeil's entire argument is that I am a lobbyist, and he repeats it continually. Yet it is demonstrably, utterly, unequivocally false. As MacNeil well knows, Consumers Union and its employees do no lobbying, as was established through sworn evidence in court; the correspondents did not even dispute it, Judge Gerhard Gesell explicitly stated this in his opinion, and the Court of Appeals did not question that finding. MacNeil's argument to the contrary—based entirely on the word *Washington* in my title and the fact that I do one thing that lobbyists sometimes do (i.e., testify before Congress)—reflects the logic of the Red Queen. Finally, MacNeil knows that Consumers Union testifies only upon written invitation from a Congressional committee and that this is not lobbying, yet he implies that we inveigle the invitations through our "connections." If MacNeil believes that nonsense, perhaps *Time* needs a new Congressional correspondent.

MacNeil litters his piece with other errors and omissions. I shall mention only a few: (1) The correspondents' original lawyer was not "fresh from law school" and had in fact tried many

cases in Court. (2) The correspondents did not win in the Court of Appeals on the First Amendment issue; the court twice stated that it would not reach that issue because it found them immune from suit. (Incidentally, several recent cases rejecting claims of legislative immunity suggest that even on that issue the Court of Appeals decision was an aberration.) The Supreme Court did not "confirm and ratify" that decision but merely declined to hear the case, a very different thing. (3) MacNeil states that he suggested a committee to study a possible rule change, but neglects to mention that this occurred only after letters protesting the exclusions were sent by Senators and members of Congress. (4) MacNeil suggests that his gallery spent months reviewing possible changes, but there is no evidence that serious consideration was given to a change or that any outsiders were ever consulted in the process.

Not content with building defenses on a foundation of innuendo and error, MacNeil proceeds to publish a scurrilous *ad hominem* attack on Judge Gesell's motives (Gesell, he says "wanted a 'freedom-of-the-press' case for his career portfolio"). MacNeil does so by hiding behind some unnamed official's words, disingenuously attributing "cynicism" to the official. It is ironic—but wholly consistent with the theme of my article—that MacNeil should hurl his most corrosive acid at a distinguished judge who had the temerity to uphold First Amendment rights against the journalistic establishment.

When MacNeil is not gratuitously insulting actual men (me, Gesell, and the lawyer who represented the correspondents in the trial court), he is savaging *straw* men. Thus he discusses at length the problem of lobbyists

disguised as journalists (a point my article made as well), but it is a problem quite irrelevant to *Consumer Reports* and *Science*, whose reporters and publishing organizations have never lobbied. (Indeed, the ancient abuses he recited were not committed by reporters for such nonprofit publishers as Consumers Union and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, but for others, including the *New York Times*.)

The important point is that, of the four special Congressional galleries, only MacNeil's excludes bona fide journalists whose organizations do not lobby, while admitting some organizations (such as his own Time Inc.) which do. The answer to the lobbying problem is really quite simple and straightforward—as Luther Carter, I, and a number of Senators and Congressmen have been saying for over four years now. It is to accredit all bona fide reporters for publications that carry a substantial volume of government-related news, provided that they swear in writing that they do not and will not lobby. Sam Shaffer of *Newsweek* once rejected this suggestion as "insulting," a term that better describes the refusal of the gallery to give *Science* the privileges accorded to *Tass* and *Modern Tire Dealer*.

What is the real issue lurking behind MacNeil's straw men? It is, of course the First Amendment rights of Luther Carter and other fine journalists who are arbitrarily excluded from the galleries. Nothing in MacNeil's response is more intriguing or revealing than his failure to even mention the First Amendment (except to suggest Judge Gesell's ignoble motives in defending it). The First Amendment does not permit privileges to be parceled out among newsmen according to whether



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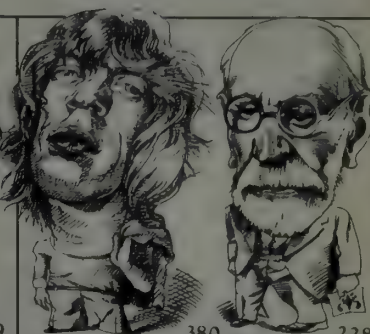
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question that finally brings me to the contrary—Christian Brothers.  
on the word *Washington* in the, and the fact that I do one thing that lobbyists sometimes do (i.e., testify before Congress)—reflects the logic of the Red Queen. Finally, MacNeil knows that Consumers Union testifies only upon written invitation from a Congressional committee and that this is not lobbying, yet he implies that we inveigle the invitations through our “connections.” If MacNeil believes that nonsense, perhaps *Time* needs a new Congressional correspondent.

MacNeil litters his piece with other errors and omissions. I shall mention only a few: (1) The correspondents’ original lawyer was not “fresh from law school” and had in fact tried many

### LETTERS

or not their magazine’s publisher seeks a profit, accepts advertising, or is separately incorporated. Under the First Amendment, it matters not that a publisher may use his magazine for personal crusades, as *Time*’s Henry Luce did in becoming the very personification of the “China lobby”; that some commercial publishers are so subservient to their advertisers that their editorial independence vanishes; that many narrowly focused trade periodicals (of the kind already accredited to the gallery) are virtually as one with the interests or trades for which they write; or that some association publications are little more than organization mouthpieces. If MacNeil’s crabbed view of the First Amendment were applied in a consistent way, his gallery would have to purge half its membership and *Time* itself would be excluded. That’s not about to happen.

PETER H. SCHUCK  
Washington, D.C.

### NEIL MACNEIL REPLIES:

Peter Schuck in a way reminds me of the member of the British Parliament of whom Lord Acton wrote: “He knew only one thing and that was wrong.” Schuck *knows* that his was a “freedom-of-the-press” case, and he is wrong. It was the most dangerous challenge to the integrity of the Washington press corps in modern times. Had he won, he would have opened the Congressional press galleries to untold hundreds of lobbyists; they were lined up waiting to apply. That’s what brought me into this case, and that’s why the leaders of Congress joined in the fight.

Schuck would have you believe that I, with my “crabbed view” somehow bamboozled the three-member U.S. Appeals Court and the Supreme Court itself into permitting the blatant violation of the constitutional rights of fellow journalists. No, he lost his suit because his claim that this was a First Amendment case did not withstand the my art of competent counsel and the his incourts.

guished Sam Ervin once told me, jokingly uphold the old lawyer’s maxim: if the the jour against you, argue the law;

When is against you, argue the insulting if the facts and the law the lawyer against you, attack your opponents lack lost on the facts and the savaging strough I did not expect him at length graceful loser, I am sur-

prised that his invective has now reached the level of a common scold’s.

I am more disturbed by his abuse of the legal processes he initiated. He claims that only Judge Gesell understood the case. He dismisses as a mere “aberration” the unanimous judgment of the Appeals Court overturning Gesell, and, incredibly, he suggests that the Supreme Court’s approval of that action should not count. Schuck has turned the federal judiciary upside down, with a district judge the supreme authority in his case.

Schuck’s posturing as the friend of the press would be comic, were it not grotesque. His self-gratulatory lecture on my professional standards approaches the obscene. For two decades and more, my father was the editor who each night decided what the *New York Times* would print the next morning. By the very nature of his position, he became in his time a leader in the never-ending struggle to protect the freedom of the press and the integrity of the press corps. I learned from him at the start that the words of the First Amendment are living words: cut them and they bleed. I learned from him at the start the meaning of professional probity. I need no lawyer-lobbyist to teach me the ethics of my craft or my responsibilities as a journalist. I had a better tutor.

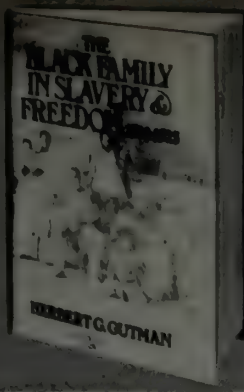
### Economic choices

Robert Lekachman’s article in the February *Harper’s* [“The Specter of Full Employment”] is good and greatly to the point. Discussion of full employment is, indeed, replete with fraud. Conservatives rightly sense that unemployment imposes a salutary fear and discipline on the working force and perhaps also on the citizenry in general. It also makes people available at modest prices for menial jobs, and it is the alternative to other—and, to them, distasteful—measures for preventing inflation. Little of this is admitted.

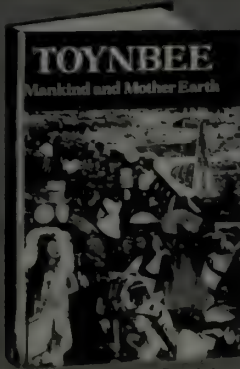
But the inspired fraud is by some, though by no means all, of our fellow liberals. They avow their support for full employment with a passion brought otherwise only to the pursuit of liberty, enforcement of the antitrust laws, and the need for regular bathing. Then they evade the choice that



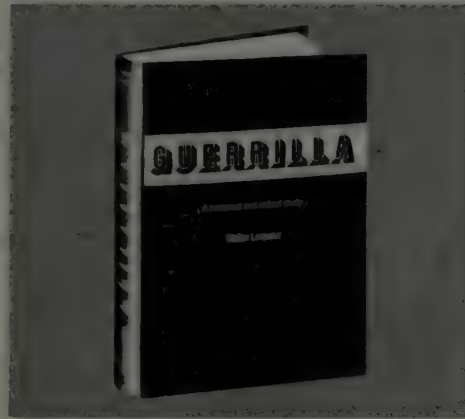
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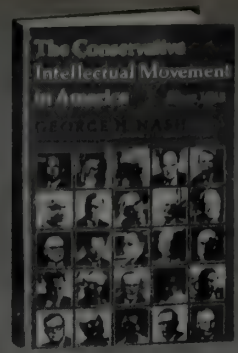
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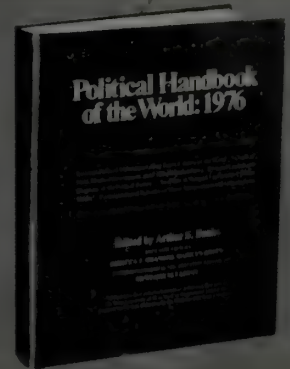
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this requires between inflation and an incomes-and-price policy, more crudely called controls. Full employment is cagily redefined to mean a lot of employment or reduced unemployment that can come only year after next. (Nothing, not even the day of the Last Judgment, has been so often foretold, so often postponed as the liberal promise of full employment.) Or, finally, it is held that some magic will intervene to make choice unnecessary once the right people are in charge. Meanwhile no one, by unnecessary honesty, denies himself his share of the reputable applause.

I am led in consequence to propose to *Harper's* readers that they enlist in a crusade for honesty on this issue. Full employment—anything below, say, 5 percent—means rising prices; of that there is no reasonable doubt. So next time you hear anyone proclaim his support of full employment ask which of the inevitable concomitants, inflation or controls, is preferred. And if the response is less than completely explicit, if there is even a suggestion of a mumble, keep asking.

I long ago concluded that controls (in combination, of course, with suitably flexible fiscal and monetary policies) are the least evil. Better than inflation—or unemployment. Anyone who so replies would have my approval. But I urge all to be tolerant. Reserve your really wholesome contempt for the person who refuses to choose, says choice is not necessary, or assures that all will be worked out if we just accept the unemployment for a while longer.

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, Mass.

Professor Lekachman needs a course in elementary logic. To say that full employment entails inflation is not the same thing as saying inflation entails full employment. Because we have had inflation without full employment (ex-President Ford's nuts-and-bolts approach seems to have toned it down quite a bit) does not in any way disprove the Phillips curve or any of the other fundamental laws of economics that Professor Lekachman seems to find so uncomfortable. It simply means that we have found other ways of creating inflation without full employment. Commodity price increases have

certainly played a part, but I would try the generous system of unemployment and welfare benefits for an answer to why unemployment hasn't produced its usual effects on the costs of manufacturing.

There is no great secret to inflation. All it means is that somebody is printing up money that isn't backed by an increase in the supply of marketable wealth in the society. The more money around, the less it's going to be worth. I lived in New England in 1966 when Lyndon Johnson's early Vietnam spending produced full employment. It was delightful. Everybody I knew was changing jobs every two months because there was always another employer willing to pay more. What we didn't know, of course, was that all the new money we were making would soon be worth much less because Johnson was simply grinding up the federal moneymaking machines rather than figuring out how all these new expenses were going to be paid. It's no surprise that, ten years later, people earning double the salary they earned in 1966 can hardly buy more. It's things like this that economists like Professor Lekachman are supposed to be able to warn us about. According to his reckoning, however, Louis XIV was the greatest social reformer in history because he printed up enough money to bankrupt the French national treasury.

WILLIAM G. TUCKER  
Nyack, N.Y.

If there is wonder among any of us as to what the kiddies are learning in school, Prof. Robert Lekachman leaves us wondering no longer. Thanks for showing me where *not* to send any of my children for an "education." That old cliché "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach"—unfair as it is to so many fine teachers—is alive and well at dear old CUNY under Lekachman. Imagine the lifelong frustrations that are likely being expressed in his classroom.

My country gave me life, it gave me liberty, it gave me opportunity, and it will give me death in about that order. None of us needs more than that. Nor do we deserve more than that.

ROBERT S. CORYA  
Business Editor  
*The Indianapolis News*  
Indianapolis, Ind.

## The fittest theory

"Revising the Facts of Life" by P. B. and J. S. Medawar [February] stands in direct conflict with a recent article in *Harper's*. Last February, *Harper's* ran a piece by Tom Bethell which attacked, if I understood it, the very same wishy-washy "official" line on evolution to be found in the Medawars' piece, namely, that Darwin's theory of evolution may be summarized as *the survival of the fittest*. Bethell correctly demanded that biologists specify the criteria for the fitness which the survivors in this vale of tears presumably possess. Bethell then proceeded to jump off the deep end and claimed that such criteria did not exist and that therefore Darwin's theory is semantic nonsense—i.e., doesn't say anything—a charge that would be true if there were no criteria. Bethell was in error. In the 1920s, the well-known biologist A. J. Lotka specified a criterion for fitness in the evolution of species. This criterion is the degree to which a species maximizes the power (energy used per unit time) flowing to that species from the energy available or potentially available to it in an ecosystem. This is not a semantic exercise, for power flows may be measured quantitatively. The natural history of this planet since life began on it more than 2 billion years ago is one of ever-increasing efficiency of the use of the energy coming here from the sun. The response to Bethell's piece in the Letters column did not present this point of view, but fell into two predictable classes:

- (1) Pats on Bethell's back.
- (2) Loud complaints from indignant biologists and pro-evolutionists. Much heat but little light.

To summarize: the Medawars' position is incomplete, Bethell's is wrong, confusion reigns, and I am dismayed.

The publication of the Medawars' piece without editorial comment can be taken to mean that *Harper's* stands aloof from the controversy over evolution theory (a proper position in my view) or that the editors do not see the contradiction between the two aforementioned articles. I hope that the first interpretation is the real state of affairs. But I also prefer that the correct basis for the evolution of life on this planet be presented, if only briefly. And I cannot help but imagine that some thought-



ul readers of *Harper's* have been confused by the conflicting views presented without comment over the past twelve months or so.

JACK A. KAECK  
De Kalb, Ill.

THE MEDAWARS REPLY:

We can understand and to some extent sympathize with Mr. Kaeck's bewilderment and dismay at the way we—and all other qualified biologists—use the word *fitness*.

Quite a number of words in the English language which have had a long history of vernacular usage have been borrowed by scientists to stand for specialized scientific ideas. *Force*, *energy*, and *tolerance* are three such words, and *fitness* is a fourth.

In everyday life the word *fitness* connotes different things to different people: to some, adaptedness; to others, propriety; to others still, the quality a man seeks when he does deep-breathing exercises at an open window. For biologists, however, fitness means *net reproductive advantage*, for all contributions to evolutionary change are paid in one currency alone: offspring. This usage is now universal among population geneticists and all who write authoritatively on evolution, e.g., Professors Ernest Mayr, George Gaylord Simpson, and Richard Lewontin, to name only a few. We are sorry if Mr. Kaeck does not like this usage and feels confused by an alleged inconsistency between different articles in *Harper's* but we feel sure that if he reads the book upon which the *Harper's* digest was based these problems will sort themselves out in his mind.

DOM BETHELL REPLIES:

As Mr. Kaeck says, the "proper position," if any, for the editors to take in an unresolved, ongoing academic controversy is a detached one.

"Revising the Facts of Life" is brilliant, and I was delighted to see an essay of this kind in a magazine devoted to the nonscientific public.

We congratulate you on publishing this article and hope it will be followed by others on various aspects of medical research.

LEONI N. CLAMAN, M.D.  
Chairman of the Board  
Allergy Foundation of America  
New York, N.Y.

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# CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED

A pornographer's use of the First Amendment

by Lewis H. Lapham

ON A FRIDAY afternoon in February I received a telephone call from a gentleman who identified himself as an editor of *Hustler* magazine and who said that he was enlisting volunteers for a defense of the First Amendment. His publisher, Larry Flynt, had been sent to jail in Cincinnati on charges of pandering obscenity, and so the editor had drafted a statement that likened Mr. Flynt's sufferings to those of Alexander Solzhenitsyn. The statement was to appear as an advertisement in the *New York Times*, and the editor was looking for interested parties, most of them in the publishing business, to set their names to it. If Mr. Flynt could be persecuted for the courage of his convictions, then nothing was safe.

Ordinarily it wouldn't have occurred to me to sign any manifesto, no matter what the cause in question. I have an aversion to polemics, partly because I think of them as futile gestures taking place in an empty hall and partly because I am accustomed to seeing them in the hands of overly excited celebrities who have trouble remembering which social justice it is that they have been asked to sponsor on which television show.

But from what I could tell by reading the papers it appeared that Mr. Flynt had been badly used by the courts. Having been convicted of pandering obscenity, a misdemeanor, he had been sentenced to between seven and twenty-five years in prison on a charge of "engaging in organized crime." It wasn't clear what the court meant by this, or why the statute obtained only in Cincinnati. Nor was it clear why Mr. Flynt had been denied bail or why the jury had not seen fit merely to prevent the local sale of his magazine.

The summary judgment reminded me that an angry suspicion of the press has been making itself increasingly manifest during the past two or three years. In New York last spring a

federal judge awarded \$250,000 to a restaurant because its premises had been invaded by a camera crew from CBS News. During the Congressional hearings into the matter of Daniel Schorr, the more belligerent members of the subcommittee kept asking witnesses to define the press, to tell them of what it consisted and by what divine right, as they chose to put it, did the press set itself above the duly elected representatives of the people. Elsewhere in the country small-town judges had lapsed into the habit of sending reporters to jail.

Within my own sphere of interest I had noticed that I was being accosted, more frequently than in years past, by people who wanted to make fairly long speeches about the vanity, ignorance, and hypocrisy of the press. I found it impossible to disagree with them, but I found it equally impossible to make them understand that it was in the nature of the press to be vain, ignorant, and hypocritical. What in God's name did they expect? Did they imagine that it was possible to write *Faust* on an afternoon deadline? Had they not found proof of vanity, ignorance, and hypocrisy in themselves, or in any other institution about which they knew slightly more than what they read in the papers? Their unhappiness always proceeded from mistaken assumptions, as if they expected the press to conform to the idealizations given credence by the Watergate news. They objected to the lackluster but accurate definition of the press as that which gets printed, sold, bought, and read. Their disappointment suggested that they were looking for God revealed as a headwaiter, flatteringly subservient but sufficiently omniscient to answer all their questions and so excuse them from the tedious business of having to think for themselves.

All of which prompted me to take seriously the imprisonment of Mr. Flynt. Not having seen his magazine, I

*Lewis H. Lapham is the editor of Harper's.*

assumed that I could make the conventional argument in support of the so-called free press. The argument relies on the paradox that the freest press is also, by definition, the most licentious press. If it is possible to assert, with Jefferson, that a free press constitutes the hope of man's enlightenment, so must it also be possible, with Balzac and Orwell, to define the press as a compendium of gossip and lies. As an abstract principle the argument has the advantage of symmetry. I think I may have said as much to Mr. Flynt's editor. That was on Friday afternoon.

ON SATURDAY I made the mistake of buying Mr. Flynt's magazine. This complicated the question. Mr. Flynt doesn't make it easy to quote passages from Milton's *Areopagitica*. The juxtaposition would be as ludicrous as the juxtaposition of Larry Flynt and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Except as a matter of arbitrary impression I never have been able to distinguish between the categories of obscenity, pornography, and erotic art. The words mean different things to different people. One man's good time is another man's sermon. But what was I to say to Mr. Flynt? Looking through the pages of his magazine, I couldn't place him in any category but that of nihilist. He presented me with an object, with a product that I conceivably could defend in an argument before the Federal Trade Commission, on more or less the same grounds that I might defend the sale and manufacture of cigarettes or automatic weapons. But what did this have to do with the First Amendment? The First Amendment states that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press. But unless I made nonsense of the language, I couldn't see how Mr. Flynt's magazine qualified under the meaning of the word *speech*. The noun implies the adjective *human*. Mr. Flynt



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achieved his effects with the subliminal suggestions of cannibalism, homosexuality, sadism, narcissism, and homicide. I grant that each of these occupations has its pleasures, but what have they to do with speech? How is it possible to construe the degradation of human beings as a constitutional right? Probably I put the proposition in too subjective a form, but I do not know how else to phrase it. In Mr. Flynt's magazine I found myself confronted by the negation of the meaning embodied not only in the First Amendment but also in the idea of civilization. Why should I protect the man who seeks to destroy what I have worked to build? If I found somebody passing out leaflets that demanded my assassination, would I argue for his right to free expression?

I have no answers to these questions. Neither, apparently, do the courts. In 1973 the Supreme Court failed to define obscenity, choosing instead to assign the task to local jurisdictions. Each community sets its own standards and takes whatever course of action it deems necessary for the protection of the public morals. In theory I can agree with this approach to the difficulty, but what happens when the local jury extends its authority beyond the local newsstand? Obviously the law remains obscure, and I expect that it will be brought back to the Supreme Court for further clarification. But I can see no reason for the press to make loud protestations about the First Amendment. Given the shabbiness of its present circumstances, the press does itself a disservice by choosing to defend its elevated principles on such doubtful and muddy ground as that offered by Mr. Flynt in Cincinnati.

On Monday I called Mr. Flynt's editor and asked that my name be removed from his advertisement. I thought no more about the subject until later in the afternoon when a reporter from the *New York Post* called to ask if it was true that I had abandoned the faith of her forefathers. She went on to say that all the best people in New York literary society (among them John Dean) had subscribed to the declaration. Her line of questioning suggested that the defense of Larry Flynt, eminent pornographer, had become as much of a *cause célèbre* as the Dreyfus affair.

NO WONDER the press has fallen so low in the public esteem. If the leading exponents of what passes for thoughtful opinion make such careless distinctions between their real and their illusory interests, then what can be the worth of the rest of their scribbling? What is the use of listening to people who chase after slogans as if they were butterflies, and by so doing allow themselves to be exploited in no less grotesque a manner than the men and women who pose for the photographs in Mr. Flynt's magazine? The people who plead the First Amendment in Mr. Flynt's behalf no doubt will say (as many of them already have said, although queasy with embarrassment) that if the constitutional guarantee can be breached in this one, admittedly distasteful, instance, then who knows what will happen next? What other trespasses will the state commit? Concede so much as a fraction of the principle, so runs the speech to the freshman class, and the enemies of freedom will descend like ravening crows.

But this is mostly let's pretend, the argument of rich children who can afford to play at being poor. In Czechoslovakia or Chile it would be seen as an absurd joke. In New York, among people who have not the opportunity to make the acquaintance of a totalitarian state, the argument costs less than a ticket to the movies. By pretending to descry fascism on the horizon, the people who would uphold the theory in defiance of the practice ignore the fascism implicit in the most vicious levels of pornography. Sooner or later the dehumanized vision of man leads to the raising of pornographic theaters at Dachau and Auschwitz.

Certainly I couldn't prove such an assertion in a court of law, and I doubt that I could even carry the point in a conversation with people who insisted on statistical tabulations. The best I could do would be to offer the historical record and to quote, exhaustively if necessary, from the works of wiser and more eloquent writers. Even this becomes difficult in an age when the meanings of words can be so easily shifted to balance the weight of money. Take for example the dictum, which happens to be Tocqueville's, that usually accompanies the loftier arguments about the paradoxes necessary to the

freedom of the press.

"In this question, therefore, there is no medium between servitude and license; in order to enjoy the inestimable benefits that the liberty of the press ensures, it is necessary to submit to the inevitable evils that it creates."

But what does he mean by "license," and what constitutes an "inevitable evil"? He was writing in an age of political pamphlets, many of them seditious, and I suspect that he referred to the profligacy and ignorance characteristic of even the most well-intentioned newspaper. But if the press no longer accepts this somewhat unflattering view of things, choosing instead to imagine itself courageous, truthful, and omnipotent, then where must it look for its supposed weaknesses except in the images purveyed by Mr. Flynt? By refusing to acknowledge its own inevitable corruptions, the press has no choice but to wrap itself in the sorcerer's robe of inhuman villainy. This is a foolish and wasteful deception.

The raucous confusion of the press is not nihilism. If as many people as possible can publish whatever information they can find (much of it wrong), or as many opinions as possible (most of them misleading), then somebody with a purpose in mind might come across something useful in the rubble. In this respect the press resembles a gigantic midden heap from which, over varying periods of time, the innumerable but miscellaneous fragments of truth can be fitted together into the shape of invention or a new idea. Like the profligacy of biological combination, the profligacy of the press nourishes the gradual awakening of an infinite number of human possibilities. The process, which is also the process of life, reaches forward into the future. The nihilist impulse slouches backward in time toward barbarism, magic, and death.

In the latter years of the eighteenth century people like Jefferson associated the oppression of the human spirit with the coercions of priests and kings. It was against this tyranny that they raised up the idea of the freedom of the press. I find it ironic that their would-be successors have no better use for their liberty than to substitute for the old antagonists the coercions of Mr. Flynt.



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# GILMORE'S VICTORY

A murderer succeeds in making the state an accomplice to his suicide

by Earl Shorris

**W**E HAVE SEEN the chair in which Gary Gilmore died. The newsmen have pointed out the bullet holes. Gilmore's chosen Boswell, an agent, has told us of the sound of the rifles and the trickle of blood that appeared below the dying man's black shirt. We injected him with the cause, he injected us with the effect, the suicide by murder. By the rules of psychological triage, attention must be paid to the survivors; our focus must be on the rages of the end.

What matters more than suicide? Wittgenstein said, "If suicide is allowed then everything is allowed." Camus began his *Myth of Sisyphus*: "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide." Gilmore was a suicide, he demanded to be murdered, but he was a suicide of a special order: he demanded to be killed by the state. The state, which in a democratic society is the collective morality, did more than allow Gilmore's suicide, the state was the instrument of his death. In some instances, even in democratic societies, the morality of the bureaucracy may be out of tune with the people, but not in this instance: chimerical democracy, as represented by the Harris poll, voted—71 percent of the people in America believed that Gilmore should be executed. Murder was on the mind of the nation that week: at the same time that Gilmore's execution was accepted, Theo-

dore Sorensen was being rejected as head of the Central Intelligence Agency because it was thought, among other things, that he had been a conscientious objector during World War II; and in Texas there was the possibility that the execution of another man would be televised.

After nearly ten years without an execution the idea of capital punishment had become, and one hesitates to use the most precise word, popular again in America. An undertone of carnival was associated with Gilmore's execution: there were jokes about him in magazines and on television, his name appeared on T-shirts, he received fan letters, newsmen wanted to hover in helicopters over the prison yard during the execution; Gilmore became a celebrity, less pitied than admired. Although he had spent half his life in prisons, was a thief, a murderer, and a suicide, a man without charm or talent, infamy had enabled him to sell his soul to the movies and his last will and testament to *Playboy*.

In the beginning, no one wanted Gilmore to be executed, no one really expected the death sentence to be carried out; but he persevered, slowly bringing people around to his desire, until even his own mother seemed to agree that he should go before the firing squad. He taught murder, using the messianic method, the example of his own life. In the end, his suicide was allowed, he succeeded in directing us to agreement with his answer to the "one truly serious philosophical problem."

Can that be true? There are many who would prefer to see Gilmore the man with the IQ of 130, the suffered genius, the victim of an authoritarian father. They would like to pity him to think that Gary Gilmore truly wished to point out the hypocrisy of society to believe that Gary Gilmore said by his death: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Murder comes easily to us; we cloak it in delusions of goodness. We slaughtered American Indians because they were savages not quite human; we enslaved blacks because they were less than human; it was not different with the Vietnamese who were gooks dressed in black pajamas, not humans like us. And when other delusions fail, we make a Christ of the victim of the raging state, as in the movies of the 1930s showing the hero criminal dying on the steps of a church or at the feet of his sainted mother. That is the danger in considering the whole man; if we concentrate upon the act, there is less risk of

Earl Shorris, a novelist, is a contributing editor of Harper's. His most recent book is *The Death of the Great Spirit*.







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## GILMORE'S VICTORY

delusion; we will not, like the *New York Times*, begin the canonization of nihilism by sweetening his acts with stories of his kindness to eleven-year-old female prizefighters.

**S**UICIDE AND execution are condoned by various societies, always by reason of the immortality of man's soul proving the act itself inconclusive. Socrates condemned argued the immortality of his soul. The Japanese suicide goes to join his ancestors, who presumably await his arrival in some heavenly place. Christian executioners commend the condemned man's soul to God, who will be the ultimate judge of his destiny. In no instance does the society of executioners or suicides accept responsibility for the act, unless the society has gone mad, as in Germany under the Nazis; for the basic order in any secular society is the refusal to allow suicide either by the victim's own hand or by murder, as in executions. Earthly death is not destiny, the final decision is made by gods or angels, heaven has its uses.

Gilmore said that earthly death was

his destiny. He refused further judgment, claiming that he had lived previous lives, but that this time he didn't want to come back, arguing that in death one could choose. In an age of disbelief, when men are either atheists or choose to think that they have been abandoned by God, Gilmore found it necessary to put the full burden of his death on the state. He left no philosophical escape routes; the act was to be final; heaven would be of no use.

Whether Gilmore was fully conscious of the meaning of his actions or whether he planned to carry out a philosophical strategy has no relevance, for every suicide, every murder, wears profound meaning; but it is interesting merely as a curiosity to know that Gilmore was told the meaning of his suicide by the American Civil Liberties Union. "Sorry, we won't let you turn us into killers," the ACLU wrote to him. And he replied, "Butt out."

A difference in clarity exists between Gilmore's execution and that of other murderers, making him a paradigm. All murderers wish to die: Camus has rightly argued that, to be capable of murder, one must be capable of suicide; only the decision to die himself

frees a man to commit murder. Opponents of capital punishment contend that executions incite murderers by demonstrating to them that their wish to die will be carried out by the state; the murderer negates, his act is absolute, yet it is unfinished until he himself is negated, dead. But the murderer who kills his victim and then turns the weapon on himself lacks the hatred of society that distinguishes the true nihilist: he limits the act of negation to his victim or victims and himself; he does not destroy the world in his rage.

On the other hand, the murderer who manipulates the state into becoming the instrument of his suicide succeeds more fully in negating the world. The act that Ludwig Wittgenstein in the *Notebooks* called "the elemental sin" has been allowed, abetted. "Everything is allowed," there are no longer limits or ethics; moral chaos is decreed, the legal apparatus negates the law upon which it is based, men are freed to commit murder—it is allowed.

The sociologist Emile Durkheim divided suicides into four categories: egoistic, altruistic, anomic, and fatalistic. Anomic suicide, he wrote, resulted from a change or failure of the social order, as in divorce or a sudden change in economic or social status from a sense of anomie. And he said anomic suicide was characterized by irritation and disgust and violent reprobation against life in general or against one particular person (homicide/suicide). When such suicides are allowed, when everything is allowed, the resultant state of anomie reproduces anomic suicide; execution functions as a breeder death.

Like Sam Hall of the folk song saying, on the gallows, "I hate you one and all," Gary Gilmore represented all murderers at the moment of execution. He had made the decision to die before he committed the first murder. He no longer feared death. There was no anxiety about the pain that might be connected with the physical execution of the sentence he had been allowed to set for himself, but he could not have feared death. His demand for capital punishment was no more than the articulation of the wish of every assassin. The enormous hatred that drives a man to negate the world spoke: "Let's do it." The anomic victory was his.

HARPER'S/APRIL 1977

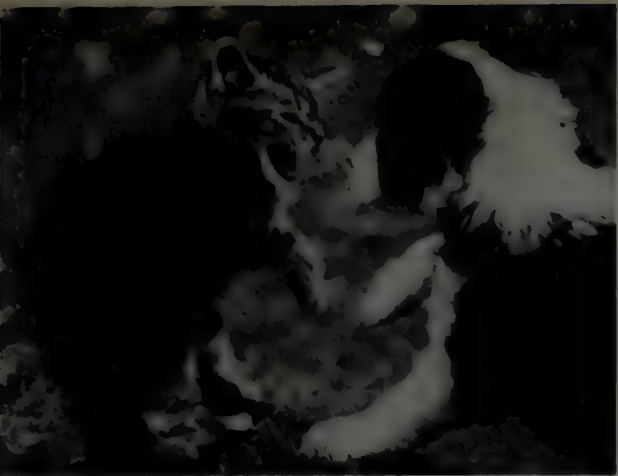
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# HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

A veteran of the Hungarian Revolution reviews the past twenty years

by Paul Jonas

**T**WENTY YEARS AGO I was *Time's* Man of the Year. I felt that the rugged, troubled but brave Hungarian Freedom Fighter on the cover of *Time*, January 1, 1957, surely resembled me. That was the feeling of many Hungarians.

With the failure of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, I escaped from my country with 200,000 other refugees. We all expected to find better living conditions, more professional facilities, and richer intellectual stimulation in the Western democracies. But we did not leave for that reason. Our real aim was to attain civil rights instead of temporary permissions, freedom of expression instead of censorship.

Among these refugees were a few hundred persons who played an identifiable role in the revolution. They knew that prison or worse awaited them if they remained at home. Many in this group had already had their tours in the Hungarian GULAG. Some of them swore that their aim was not to settle in a host country but rather to use the outside-world as a base of operations for changing conditions in Hungary. The strategy of these political exiles was to put strong pressure on the Hungarian authorities through international organizations, Western governments, and world public opinion in order to end police terror and other repressive measures. Then, according to the theory, the Hungarian democratic forces would be able to organize at home and, with the help of the population, would oust the oppressor. After that, everybody would go back and

implement the cherished goals of the revolution.

I was an enthusiastic member of this refugee group. As a member of the Hungarian Committee in New York, I became one of the high-ranking persons in the Hungarian exile community. Our organization often postured as a government-in-exile.

Paging over my scrapbook of 1957 is bittersweet. I cannot help asking myself, "Who was this dangerously naive individual whose behavior was so irrational and who proposed so many unworkable ideas?" At my present level of disgusting sophistication and rotten cynicism, I can hardly believe that it was me.

I also ask myself, "Were we misguided? Were the apparently responsible Western politicians who encouraged us really interested in the tragic fate of Hungary, or were they using the revolution to influence the internal politics of their own countries, or to score points in the international propaganda war?"

True, we did not need much encouragement; we went to dance rather easily. Our role was extremely simple. Tamás Pásztor, the first Hungarian revolutionary to arrive in Paris, attracted several thousand persons to a meeting at which his performance consisted of displaying a bloodied Hungarian flag. My scrapbook starts with the mementos of our first appearances before sophisticated audiences such as the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. We had flattering introductions and better-than-average receptions. Why? Were we so eloquent? Were we so knowledgeable?

Neither. Our message was delivered haltingly, as we searched for words and expressions in a foreign language. The heart of what we said—that life in Hungary and generally in the Soviet

bloc was so different from life outside as to constitute a completely different world—was no doubt yesterday's news for our learned audiences. It is probable, however, that this sad truth was believed fully for the first time. They had to trust us. We represented in person the most dramatic event in European history since the second world war, the joys and horrors of a revolution. Revolutions in Europe are sacred and rare phenomena.

After a short time, it was suggested that we should relocate to the United States. "Look, we can give you all of our sympathy," said a French politician, "but if you would like to have action you ought to approach the Americans and the United Nations."

**I** ARRIVED IN NEW YORK in 1957, on St. Patrick's Day. I watched the festivities with total amazement. I seriously thought that this was an average day in the life of the city of my dreams.

Looking further in my scrapbook, I can find a letter from the Office of the Vice-President. Richard Nixon assured me that "the Hungarian fight for freedom will be long remembered as a heroic chapter in the history of man's constant struggle to release himself from the bonds of tyranny and to achieve liberty." Then, a less poetic but very welcome communication came from the Rockefeller Foundation informing me that the enclosed check for \$750 was not a loan and that I should not repay it. We were certainly lucky exiles.

Meeting the American public was most instructive. At a luncheon sponsored by the Crusade for Freedom and attended by wealthy businessmen (I appeared in a dark suit), I stressed

*Paul Jonas, a veteran of Nazi and Stalinist prisons, was the last chairman of the Petöfi Circle, the intellectual center of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. At present he is professor of economics at the University of New Mexico.*



that the revolution wanted a market-type economy. Speaking with Norman Thomas and Michael Harrington at a meeting organized by the Young People's Socialist League (I wore a sweater), I assured the audience that our final aim was to establish democratic socialism. At the Washington Heights synagogue (they put a little black hat on my head), I told the congregation about the numerous Jews who had been in the leadership of the revolution. As a representative of the Captive European Nations, I was the main speaker on Freedom Day at the Statue of Liberty (around me, Marine guards), and I was as forceful as a member of a military junta. ("Your message was broadcast to the East European countries, where you gave cause for renewed hope," said a letter from Gen. Willis Crittenger, president of the Free Europe Committee.)

My appearances were minor compared to those of my friends. They were invited on world tours. In Asia they emphasized the Asian origin of the Hungarians, in Europe our belonging to the Continent. I seriously envied Gen. Béla Király, who had the pleasant duty of crowning the Peach Queen in Florida.

We did all the tricks politicians ought to do.

Then, to make a long story short, interest dwindled, and it became evident that there was no reason to burn oneself out as a professional exile. We enrolled in various universities, took graduate degrees (for many of us they were the second after the Hungarian), found jobs, and inched ahead in the academic establishments and the professions. Some of us, including myself, also performed actions which could be considered important in one's personal life, such as mating, reproducing, and home-building.

Now? Life is not bad. The teaching load at the University of New Mexico is six hours a week, the salary is more or less adequate for nine months of teaching and moderate publishing, the surroundings are pleasant, and there is a dramatic view of the Sandia Mountains. One can occasionally exchange teaching for government service, and it is not too difficult to escape to exotic lands in a sabbatical year. International conferences are abundant, and with a little luck one can hop around Europe in the summer.

My friends are living similar, comfortable lives, confirming the proposition of some sociologists who suggest that the 1956 Hungarian refugees have arrived at positions normally not reached till the second or third generation.

We have the expected freedom and material rewards, but are we really happy in this joyless society haunted by the Puritan ethic and wholly inexperienced in the art of loving, living, and laughing? Do we have real friends with whom we can sit down for a conversation about personal things, music, literature, politics, legends? Are we still able, after the second bottle of wine, to cry with laughter and laugh with tears? Doesn't the lack of strong and emotional relationships drive us, along with our American acquaintances, into the arms of predatory psychiatrists? In the impersonal atmosphere of common eating places that remind us of filling stations, don't we think about the taste of smoked meat, the skin of bacon cut in small pieces and served with chopped golden onions, fried and sprinkled with paprika?

Our children do not know what the revolution was, nor do they care very

much. They are surrounded with their gadgets and feel deprived if the swimming pool is unheated. Their Hungarian is broken or nonexistent; their English is perfect. And we, old revolutionaries, we are not the same as we were. Our generous leisure time, created by the labor-saving devices of a technologically advanced society, is used up while we are glued to the TV, watching our favorite football team. Within the closed borders of Hungary our dream was to travel, to see the world, its people and its places. Now the excitement of discovery is lost; travel broadens our feet, not our minds. We feel misplaced; no one asks for our story anymore, no one knows why we arrived here, and there are moments when we do not know either.

Suddenly, I see in various newspapers and magazines the names of my friends who are recounting their memories of the revolution now at this twentieth anniversary. I consider this phenomenon to be the last twitch before we disappear into the melting pot.

History will not remember us as successful immigrants but as exiles, miserable, unhappy, and failed. ■■■

HARPER'S/APRIL 1977

# Encounter Austria

## I flirted with Lady Luck in Kitzbühel

She stood in the casino at Kitzbühel cleverly disguised as a beautiful girl, but I knew she was really Lady Luck, ruler of roulette, baroness of baccarat. It was no time to be shy. I took the plunge and asked her to join me for a glass of wine. She nodded. My luck changed for the better. Casinos in Austria offer favorite

indoor sports, and the odds favor your chances. Still, flirting with Lady Luck is always a gamble. But Austria's casinos are set in such splendid surroundings that even when fate says "no" the land says "yes". So everybody wins. I like risk. The wheel makes my blood run hot. But I never risk losing pleasure. I place my bets in Austria.

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# A SHORT HISTORY OF FORM 1040

The income-tax regulations make a steady progress toward entropy

by Peter Meyer

**O**N OCTOBER 11, 1913, Edward S. Beach dashed off an angry letter to the *New York Times*. He called President Wilson "the father of spies," and thanked the "whole brood of predatory politicians for the coming espionage." Beach was convinced that the new tax law would unleash upon the country a whole "army of Federal spies whose nose will be stuck into the affairs of every man sus-

*Peter Meyer is a free-lance correspondent.*

pected of having an income of \$3,000 or more a year."

Unfortunately for Beach, the vast majority of Americans earned much less than \$3,000 a year in 1913. In fact, they welcomed a law which promised to police the incomes of the rich, a measure which would redistribute the wealth and equalize the tax burden. The week before Beach's letter, Congress had attempted to do just that.

With its newly acquired Sixteenth

Amendment powers, Congress wrote the first income-tax law of the century, an appendage to the Underwood-Simmons Tariff Act which reduced the tariff to its lowest level since the Civil War. Rep. Cordell Hull, chief draftsman of the income tax, had called the tariff an "infamous system of class legislation." The new tax, he argued, would rectify the inequities of a system which was "virtually exempting the Carnegies, the Vanderbilts, the Morgans and the Rockefellers with their aggregated billions of hoarded wealth." Congressman Hull also boasted that the new law was brief. In less than fifteen pages, Congress spelled out the income-tax requirements for both corporations and individuals. Only on net incomes above \$3,000 (roughly equivalent to \$17,550 today), said Congress, would the "normal tax" of 1 percent be levied. An additional tax ranging from 1 to 6 percent was imposed on amounts in excess of \$20,000 (about \$117,000 today). In the first full year of enforcement of the new law, the tax burden fell to a scant 357,000 people—less than one-half of 1 percent of the population. Few could complain. At a time when the per capita annual income of the gainfully employed hovered near \$900, the weight of the tax ballast fell clearly to those most able to pay.

On January 5, 1914, the Treasury Department unveiled the individual income-tax blank. Form 1040, together with its instructions—four pages in all—read like a Dick-and-Jane primer. It was short enough to be reproduced, instructions included, in four columns of a single page of the *New York Times*. (The next day two New Jersey gentlemen filed the *Times's* clippings,

## THEN AND NOW

	1914	1975	Percentage Change
U.S. population	97 million (est.)	214 million	120
U.S. labor force	34.8 million (est.)	94.8 million	172
Total Internal Revenue collections	\$415.6 million (\$2.43 billion today)	\$293.8 billion	11,900
Individual income tax collected	\$41.04 million (\$24 billion today)	\$156.4 billion	551
Number of individual returns	357,515	85,518,719	23,800
Percent of population taxed	Less than .5%	40%	
Percent of labor taxed	1%	90%	
Tax per capita	\$4.28 (\$25.03 today)	\$1,375	5,390
Tax per return	\$114.80 (\$671.58 today)	\$1,840	173
IRS employees	4,000	82,000	1,950
IRS employees per capita	1:24,250	1:2609	829
IRS forms	45 (est.)	4,050	8,900
ABA members	8,033 (1913)	218,146	2,600
IRS lawyers	1	800	799
Tax-related court cases	4,731	43,687	820
IRS costs	\$6.8 million (\$39.7 million today)	\$1.58 billion	3,900
Number of words of law	10,000 (good est.)	750,000 (good guess)	7,400



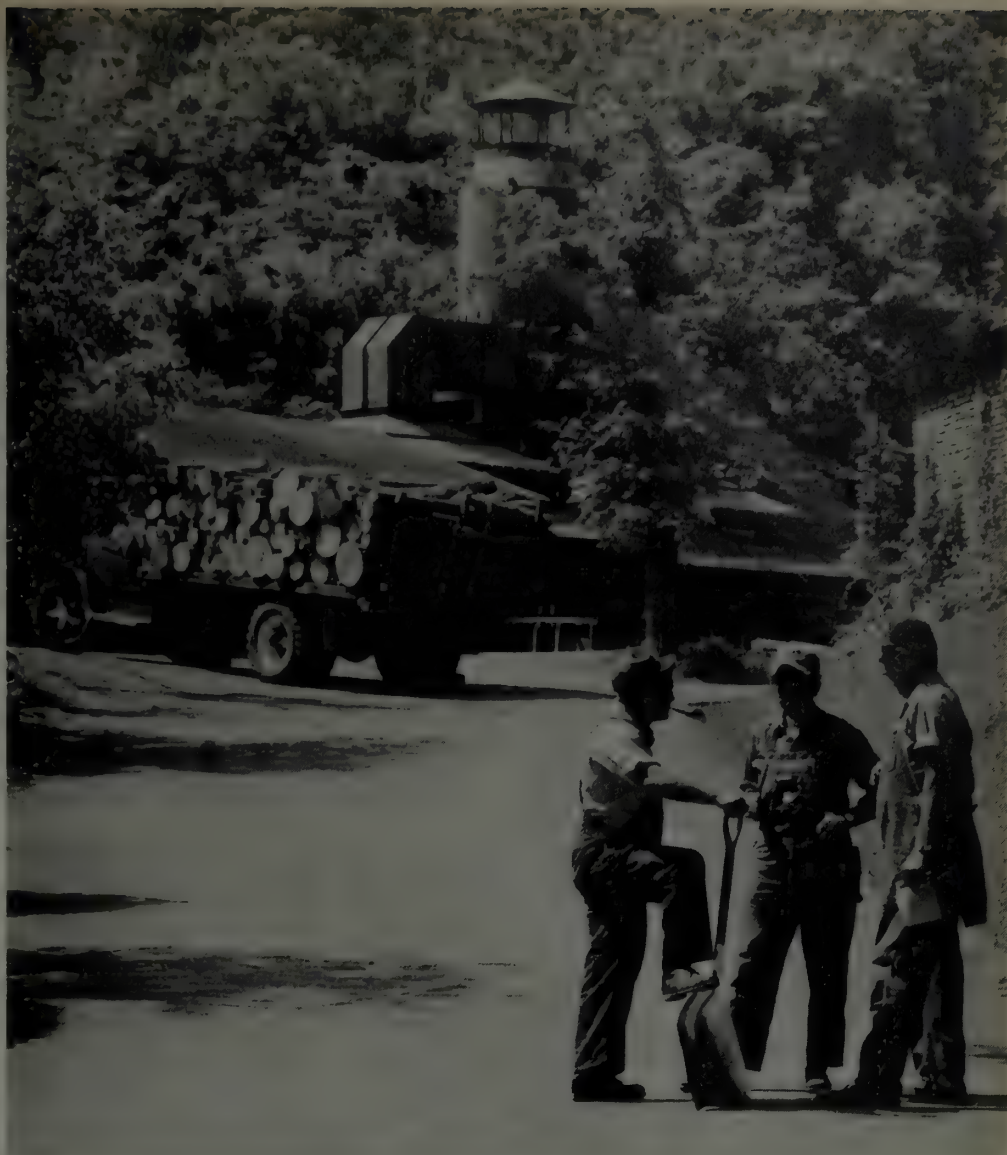
dutifully filled in, with their local revenue agent.) The original 1040 form is no less a relic of simpler times than the 1913 law itself. But the majority of the country, it seems, once granted a reprieve from taxation in 1913, sighed in relief and promptly fell asleep. From a perspective granted by six decades of tax increases and bureaucratic expansion, it appears that something has run amok.

**R**EP. CHARLES A. VANIK was born just a few months before the passage of the first income-tax law. He now sits on the House Ways and Means Committee, but believes that "there is an Alice-in-Wonderland quality in speaking of a voluntary tax system when nearly half of the nation's taxpayers feel that they must get or pay others to help them complete their own returns." The phenomenal proliferation of law, loophole, litigation, and juridical exegesis has spawned a huge tax industry. It gathers its capital from legal conundrums. "The tax system and support for it," as Vanik points out, "is being smothered by the endless forms, instructions, and complexities of present tax law."

During 1975 the weekly *Internal Revenue Bulletin* notified its subscribers of 576 revenue rulings, 66 revenue procedures, 27 public laws relating to internal Revenue matters, 31 committee reports, 3 executive orders, 42 Treasury decisions, and a host of other agenda. What does this catalogue of IRS statistics and tax-law twists and turns do for taxpayers? It ensures that millions of them run to the doors of their preparers each year for guidance.

But even this recourse is not safe. A report reluctantly released by the IRS last year revealed that the experts, too, are confused. Three out of four tax returns filed by paid preparers—attorneys, public accountants, CPAs, commercial preparers—for those with incomes between \$10,000 and \$50,000 contain mistakes. Even the IRS errs on 79 out of each 100 returns it completes for the middle-income taxpayer.

Altogether the IRS audits a couple of million returns each year. And each year the American taxpayer comes up short—\$5.3 billion in 1975. Countless millions more contain mathematical errors, most of which increase the taxpayer's liability when corrected. (The



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## A SHORT HISTORY OF FORM 1040

word *countless* is a slight exaggeration because there are very few things which the IRS doesn't count.) The mistakes, whether made innocently or fraudulently, speak less than optimistically either about our ability to comprehend our tax responsibilities or our desire to tolerate them.

**S**O CONGRESS bemoans the muddle in the IRS while the service pleads for simplification of the law. Commissioner Donald Alexander once told a Ways and Means subcommittee that taxpayers couldn't "find their way through the maze that Congress intended for them." Though the Tax Reform Act of 1976 was the most extensive overhaul of the system since the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, it did little to de-maze the law. As a result, the commissioner was forced back to the drawing board to relay the good news to 1977 taxpayers. "Completing your return this year," he writes, "could be more difficult."

The instructions for page one of this year's 1040 comprise nearly four pages. If the taxpayer perseveres that far he will have already encountered 15 "cau-

tions" and "notes," as well as 206 "if" clauses, and been referred to another 39 forms, schedules, and related IRS publications. If he had a question about estimated itemized deductions for alimony expenses, for example, and had a copy of the new law at hand he might turn to Code Section 3402(m) (2) (A) for explanation:

*The term "estimated itemized deductions" means the aggregate amount which he reasonably expects will be allowable as deductions under chapter 1 (other than the deductions referred to in sections 141 and 151 and other than the deductions required to be taken into account in determining adjusted gross income under section 62 other than paragraph (13) thereof) for the estimation year.*

As the figures show, most taxpayers will pay an expert to make their mistakes.

The code remains our basic tax document, a legal farrago that, as one IRS spokesman has said, "defies human understanding." Prior to last year's Reform Act it was barely compactible into a single bulky volume. The amend-

ing legislation is itself nearly 1,000 pages long. There are also volumes of *Income Tax Regulations* (the Treasury Department's interpretation of the code), volumes of *Revenue Rulings* (the IRS's interpretation of specific situations), and more volumes of court decisions. It's no wonder that such an imposing tax industry has risen to interpret, administer, and exploit that document.

How many different livelihoods depend on the legal tax jargon? Nine percent of the 218,146-member American Bar Association are considered tax specialists. The IRS itself employs more than 800 attorneys; some 200 lawyers work in the Justice Department's Tax Division. Hundreds of commercial tax preparers (in the Manhattan Yellow Pages alone, seventy-five entries crowd under the "Tax Preparation" heading) vie for the \$600 million that Americans pay annually for their services. H. & R. Block, "the income tax people," last year prepared 10 percent of the more than 85.5 million individual income tax returns. Twenty research centers across the country find sustenance in tax specializing, as do 14 tax associations and some 300 journals and periodicals. And not to be forgotten in the enumeration is the IRS and its 82,000 employees, 4,050 different forms, and hundreds of publications.

The latest development in the tax imbroglia industry is the electronic law libraries. Their services are increasingly valuable as a means of sorting through what otherwise would be reams of paper. The Lexis Library of Meade Data Central, Inc., for example, has nearly 300 subscribers throughout the country. In a matter of seconds any one of them may requisition the latest tax regulation or court decision from an IBM 370/155 computer. Not surprisingly, Meade's most frequent patron is the Internal Revenue Service.

It has taken less than sixty-four years to slide into a system which warrants Mr. Beach's wrath. In the meantime we seem also to have slipped "through the looking-glass" and come upon a system bereft of manageability, not to mention comprehensibility. But Lewis Carroll said it best. "Curiouser and curiouser!" cried Alice... "Now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was! Good-bye, feet!"

HARPER'S/APRIL 1977

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# BLOWING IN THE WIND

The President's plan may be to follow where the people lead

by Tom Bethell

**I**N WASHINGTON the abiding clichés have to do with “power”—already I have succumbed to the temptation to put the word into quotation marks. New York is money, but Washington, so it is said, is power. The tidy and comfortable apposition of power and money is reaffirmed every four years when a small number of Wall Street lawyers and bankers temporarily forgo six-figure salaries in favor of five and take up residence by the Potomac. If they don't do it for the money, so the argument runs, it must be because of the power. (This argument neglects to consider that these people usually have enough money when they come to Washington, and that they are not exactly underpaid after they arrive).

The phrase *power game* has been making its quadrennial appearance in the local press. This may be a more accurate way of looking at the matter. The power game has to do with such things as the size and location of one's office; sitting at last in a Judge's Rotary Tilting Chair generously supplied by the General Services Administration; having *two* secretaries in an outer office; attending breakfast meetings (*the* status meal in Washington); “having an ‘in’ with” some luminous bureaucrat, however transitory he may

prove to be; being sufficiently in the good graces of the headwaiter to get a 12:30 reservation at the Sans Souci (anyone can get in at 1:30), and so on.

The theory is that these things constitute merely the trappings of power. Having them demonstrates that you also have the real thing, power itself, which supposedly manifests itself in the ability to reorder other people's lives, to issue edicts that are heard and acted upon across the land, and to formulate something called “policy.”

But this, the season for optimism on the part of incoming officeholders, is also the season for disenchantment. Deposed courtiers, almost literally passing the newcomers on the White House steps, are not loath to cast themselves in the roles of philosophers. Consider the following independent but similar comments, addressing themselves, if I am not mistaken, to a loss of illusions about power:

“Keep your sense of humor.”—James T. Lynn, former director of the Office of Management and Budget.

“Keep your sense of humor about your position.”—Donald Rumsfeld, former Secretary of Defense.

“Have at least one good laugh a day.”—William Scranton, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

“Never lose your sense of humor.”

—Sheila Weidenfeld, Mrs. Ford's press secretary.

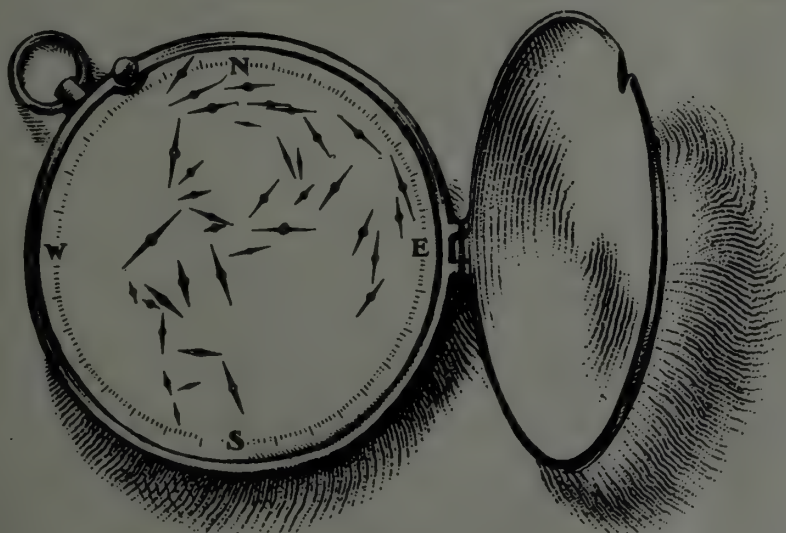
“Take it from all sides with a smile on your face.”—Thomas Kleppe, former Secretary of the Interior.

Take it? One thought that being at the center of power meant giving it, not taking it. But apparently not. The power blows inward rather than outward, like a wind blowing the sails of a windmill.

If we liken power to a wind, a further point suggests itself. The winds that blow into Washington from the various points of the geographical and ideological compass are a good deal stronger than the relatively faint breezes that emerge from the city. No energy is lost, of course. The difference between the incoming and outgoing power is what drives the city. So many conflicting interests converge in the Washington vortex that most of the energy is destroyed in the collision. The competing bureaucracies; the rival fiefdoms within the bureaucracies; the ferocious ideological debates (often on the level of “No, you are not right to think that!”); the backbiting, backscratching, backstabbing—all these activities consume a noticeable proportion of the available energy, but they have a way of cancelling one another out. And it is no doubt best that they do. An executive agency or a regulatory commission, for example, reflects the differing aims of various groups within society, and to the extent that those aims are incompatible (as they often are), the bureaucracy in question is likely to end up doing nothing. In the same way, if two equal and opposite air masses collide, little more than a rumble of thunder is likely to ensue.

Washington is Thunder City—full of the sound and fury signifying power. There are, of course, breezes blowing outward from the capital (particularly these days, from the Judiciary, which performed a constitutionally unfore-

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seen volte-face some years back and became activist in the sense of extending the power of government, rather than, as previously, limiting it), but one feels strongly that power in Washington tends to be above all a short-range phenomenon—the power to appoint subordinates, for example; or, as recently so aptly demonstrated by President Carter, the power to reduce the size of the White House staff. (It is quite likely that this will turn out to be his only reduction of the bureaucracy, which grows slowly but inexorably larger each year, making it plain that the President has very little say in the matter.) Washington power has a way of turning out to be little more than control over one's entourage; it rarely extends beyond the District of Columbia. It is the power to play power games. Power really is a matter of "proximity," as the Washington adage has it, because power is being at the center and knowing the real, true, inside story. Power is not needing a gossip columnist. Maybe that is why a sense of humor proves to be indispensable.

THE WEATHER VANE comes to mind when thinking about power in Washington. It is a useful metaphor for the capital. A two-dimensional rooster stuck up on a rooftop and mounted on well-oiled bearings, the weather vane discerns the consensus of the winds that blow in from the plains and points in the inevitable direction.

In time, the foolish rooster comes to believe that he controls the direction of the wind. But we, detached observers, know that the secret lies in the well-oiled bearing. Should it get rusty, if the wind blows hard or changes direction, the rooster is in danger of being torn off the rooftop.

Richard Nixon, perhaps, thought that he controlled the wind. But Jimmy Carter is a well-oiled bird, constructed to survive in the highest winds. He may well be the best-made weather vane we've seen in Washington in many a year.

This may seem to be a derogatory interpretation of Carter's role as President. But there is reason to believe that Carter himself conceives of the Presidency in a very similar way, and has done so ever since he began to run for the office more than two years ago.

Carter, I think, knows that Washington's power blows in rather than out, and that he as President can do little more than signal the "net" direction.

The argument that the "great men" of history—kings, generals, Presidents—are forced into an inevitable course of action by those whom they ostensibly lead is the thesis of *War and Peace*. Tolstoy argues that "kings and generals are history's slaves," whereas individuals lower in the social hierarchy, and therefore detached from the forces of "power," are by comparison much freer to act as they will.

In *Why Not the Best?* Jimmy Carter tells us that when he was about twelve years old his high-school teacher, Miss Julia Coleman (whom he quoted, along with the prophet Micah, in his Inaugural Address) "called me in and stated that she was ready for me to read *War and Peace*." Carter then gives a cursory synopsis of the book: "The course of history was changed as great men struggled for military and political power. But the book is not written about the Emperor or the Czar. It is mostly about the students, farmers, barbers, housewives and common soldiers."

Carter is familiar with the theory of historical determinism: "The purpose of the book is to show that the course of human events—even the greatest historical events—is determined ultimately not by the leaders but by the common, ordinary people. Their doubts and fears, their courage and tenacity, their quiet commitments determine the destiny of the world."

This is interesting in itself, but it is followed by an insight that is, I think, exceptional, especially coming from a man who has spent the past two years laboriously crisscrossing the country, shaking hands at factory gates at dawn, and finally defeating an incumbent President.

"If the author were correct in his claim that the destiny of nations is controlled by the people," Carter writes, "even when they are ruled despotically by kings and emperors, how much more true should this be in a nation like ours where each of us is free! Our government is supposed to be shaped and controlled by the collective wisdom and judgment of those among us who are willing to exert this power and democratic authority."

Carter says that *War and Peace* was

"one of my favorite books," and he tells us that he read it "two or three times since then" (no mean feat in itself), so even allowing for his cautious use of the subjunctive mood in assessing Tolstoy's thesis ("If the author were correct...") it hardly seems an exaggeration to say that Carter became President without expecting to be able to be much more than a weather vane. If so, this is surely unprecedented for a President at the beginning of his term (although others may well have arrived at the same conclusion, in a spirit of eventual disillusionment).

In addition, Carter must feel that his own experience tends to confirm Tolstoy's argument. His elevation from Plains to the White House, with very little assistance from the recognized "power structure"—indeed, despite its active opposition until shortly before the Democratic convention—must surely encourage his suspicions as to the reality of the power behind these structures. If the "Washington power elite" couldn't stop him, what can it do? (On the other hand, the one "power structure" that may well have helped Carter is network television. Its technology may well operate to make "new faces" become national figures more quickly and effectively than anyone suspected.)

JUST ABOUT everything President Carter has said or done to date suggests that he believes Tolstoy was right and that it is pointless to try, like Nixon, to resist the wind. Better yet, that he who perceives the wind can sail along in it. In his appointments, Carter seems to have acted on the theory that the best thing is to give the people what they want if that is discernible. If, on the other hand, the people's will (the prevailing wind) is hard to judge, then he must hoist up another weather vane. Cyrus Vance is surely such an example at the State Department. The best description of Vance that I have seen came from Leslie H. Gelb, then of the *New York Times*. "Wherever he has gone he has left no footprints," Gelb wrote. (But Vance did not take it to heart, subsequently appointing Gelb to be his director of Politico-Military Affairs at the State.)

For Secretary of Defense, Carter is



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initially floated a couple of trial balloons—Paul Warnke and James Schlesinger. Both seemed somewhat inflexible for the gales blowing above the Pentagon these days and were hastily lowered, to be replaced by the more protean Harold Brown. This prompted a vigilant guardian of Pentagon welfare on Capitol Hill to remark a few days later: "There's something wrong with a man who takes as his first two choices for moral counselor Beelzebub and St. Paul." Not necessarily, though. More likely Carter was simply acknowledging that the "common, ordinary people" know best, and in that he may have been right.

Again, consider Carter's Inaugural Address. Rhetorically it was as soft as a ball of putty, waiting to be stamped with any imprint. His use (three times in the address) of the phrase "human rights" is an illustration. This is taken by liberals to refer to Chile, Iran, and South Korea; by conservatives to refer to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Which did Carter mean? Either or both, obviously. Whatever the people want. Not surprisingly there was an immediate mix-up when the State Department "aimed" the phrase at the Soviets, prompting at first a soft disavowal by Vance, then a muted reaffirmation—a tentative backing and filling, damp fingers raised into the wind. By the time of his fireside chat, Carter's ideological inclinations on the subject remained as invisible as ever. "We will continue to express our concern about violations of human rights," he said, "as we have during the last week, without upsetting our efforts toward friendly relations with other countries."

Thomas Kleppe, late of Interior, comes to mind once again. On his way out he recommended to the incomers: "Stay on the balls of your feet and be ready to move in any direction." That is what Carter is doing, together with a lot of other maneuverers in Washington. Broadly speaking, participants in the day-to-day Washington skirmishing can be divided into two categories: pragmatists and ideologues; weather vanes and signposts. The signposts can't get up too high in the wind. They keep a "low profile." You don't often see their names in the papers (for the good reason, in many instances, that they prefer to act as "sources" of news). They advise Senators, whisper in the recesses of Congressional

committees. By contrast, those who make bold plays for the most visible jobs—positions that frequently require Senate confirmation and thus potentially dangerous questions—remain remarkably flexible in their positions. They can pivot.

This tendency might have been noted at the outset of almost any administration, but it is particularly marked now because, for the first time in more than a decade, "correct" opinion is not immediately apparent. In Washington, it is far more important to hold the right opinions than to wear the right clothes (especially since Carter showed up at a Cabinet meeting in a windbreaker), but what are the right opinions? There is much uncertainty. The past year has brought forth a number of noticeable shifts in fashion.

When Daniel Patrick Moynihan spoke out against the anti-American brigade at the United Nations in 1975, there was much hissing and spitting directed at him from Washington. This has quieted down since he arrived here as a Senator, and one hears that he is colorful instead of crass. In part this is pure deference, but in part an acknowledgment of the fact that anti-Americanism is now becoming downright unfashionable in Washington, even among intellectuals. Then again, for years there was Richard Nixon, a most valuable lightning rod, to whose presence all public and private failings could be ascribed. Now he has departed, leaving in his absence much doubt and uncertainty. (It was *his* fault before, but *now* whose fault is it?) And before Nixon there were those other issues and events giving rise to moral certitude: Vietnam, the civil-rights movement, heady memories of Camelot. . . .

Now no one clearly has the moral edge. This is by far the most interesting aspect of Carter's Washington today. There are no villains—discounting, if I may, the multinational corporations and the oil companies, who have been trundled onstage by the gentlemen of the media in an attempt to fill the Nixonian vacuum. *Where* are the bad guys? We're all standing around in the capital, scratching our heads and wondering. Rockefeller has gone, leaving many a conspiracy theorist bereft. Whether the Trilateral Commission can fill that void remains to be seen. J. Edgar Hoover is dead and

buried, the impulse to tear his name off the new FBI building having subsided too. CIA headquarters survived the guerrilla raids; Ehrlichman is in jail; Kissinger is fading fast. . . .

All in all, there has been a remarkable selling off of the ideological inventory. But the weather vanes are in place, the trial balloons aloft. Is that a right-wing breeze stirring up in the hinterland? Theodore Sorensen had barely arrived at his prospective perch before he was swept aside. Could the new enemies turn out to be the Russians once again? Carter's comments on this have been interesting, not to say curious. "I hope I have a chance to exemplify what the American people are and what they would like to be," he said, characteristically, as he set forth from Plains to Washington. "I think I have it within me, to the extent I can represent the American people well, to achieve greatness." Then he added: "I hope that achievement doesn't come through unanticipated crisis or the prospect of war or some catastrophe that I might help to resolve."

Carter knows enough history to know that crisis and external threat can be conducive to a perception of "greatness" in the leader. Having suggested the idea, he couldn't relinquish it. Two weeks later, in his fireside chat, Carter remarked: "I remember another difficult time in our nation's history when we felt a different spirit. During World War II we faced a terrible crisis—but the challenge of fighting against fascism drew us together." He added, almost ominously: "I believe we are ready for that same spirit again."

No one will deny, I think, that Jimmy Carter has well-tuned antennae, and they seem to be telling him that the new threat will be external—foreign rather than domestic. If so, it should generate the steady moral breeze needed to point the weather vane unambiguously in one direction—just as signposts do. Or, one might say, to lift the flag clear of the ratlines, around which it has been twisted. Carter will be the flag, uplifted by the people.

"If we are a united nation, then can be a good President," Carter said at the end of his fireside chat. One has to admire his candor—and, I submit, his realism. Most Presidents would have put it the other way around.



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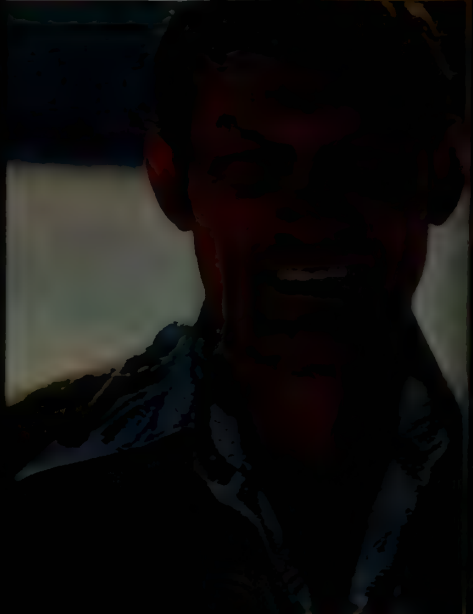
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# DAUGHTERS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

Marching to a familiar tune

by Diana Trilling

IN THE SPRING OF 1971 I returned to Radcliffe, my old college, to live in one of the dormitories where I had lived as an undergraduate in the Twenties and to interview as many students as possible to see what similarities and differences I might find between the present-day undergraduate and my own college generation. It was early April when my husband and I installed ourselves in Briggs Hall, to remain until shortly before commencement in June. If there was anything remarkable in our being a couple, a male and a female, in this once all-female stronghold, clearly this was a curiosity in my eyes only: the hall had become coeducational the previous year, and in these very corridors where once one had had to shout "Man coming!" to announce the visit of a certified father or uncle to an upper floor, males were now everywhere in sight—the prevailing sexual tolerance was broad enough to embrace the legality of my husband's and my partnership. Rather more surprising, even to me, was the readiness—nay, eagerness—of the students of both sexes to let me question them and record their answers for possible publication.

But it of course took a few days for my presence in the dormitory to become known, and in

the meanwhile I depended, for the initiation of my work, on the two or three students to whom I had introductions from mutual friends outside the college. Among these was a young woman to whom I give the name of Alice. It fell to this charming girl of nineteen to point



*Diana Trilling has been fiction critic of The Nation and has contributed to a wide range of periodicals here and abroad. This article is adapted from We Must March My Darlings, a book of essays to be published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in May.*

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the direction of many subsequent interviews which I conducted, for, so far from being unique among her college kind, Alice turned out to be unusual only in the extremity of her academic situation, not at all in her plight as a young woman as full of confusion as of gift, the waste of whose talents was being strangely conspired in by her school. She had come to Radcliffe from the Middle West with a superb high-school record, hoping to major in history, but with the end of her first year had become disenchanted with this plan and, drawn by an old taste for drawing and photography, had enrolled in a new field of concentration, the Department of Visual Studies. She was now in her sophomore year and taking three courses in this new department: freehand drawing, three-dimensional application of color, and a course in the psychology of art. We had not talked very long when it horribly occurred to me to ask Alice about the reading required of her in Visual Studies. It turned out, as I had surmised it might, that no reading was assigned in any of her courses—in fact, if one majored in Visual Studies, one could graduate from Harvard, even with highest honors, without ever having read a book. Noting the dismay this discovery caused me, Alice hurried to comfort me by describing a sophomore study-group to which she belonged; it supplied the bookwork lacking in her classes. Once a week, she and her sophomore colleagues met to discuss some book or topic which, as Alice put it, helped them “to interrelate the fields within the department”—indeed, the group was to meet that very evening. That evening, however, a book would not be discussed. The person who would tonight take on the weighty function of interrelating the fields of visual study would be the skywriter who had created an artificial rainbow over the Charles River as part of the anniversary celebration of the Boston Museum of Art, called “Earth, Water, and Air.” I was unfamiliar with the Boston Museum’s centenary celebration. But if Alice was correct in saying that as part of the festivities there had been a program called “Earth, Water, and Air” which sponsored skywriting and the creation of an ad hoc rainbow over the Charles River—and I had no reason to doubt her report—it was clearly unfair to question the intelligence of a nineteen-year-old who had come to believe that manifestations such as these belonged to the serious business of education. And in similar vein I had to ask myself to what extent the Alices of our world, young women who had brought their splendid native endowments to what was commonly considered the best college for women in the country,

were accountable for squandering not only what their general culture but also their college culture so little encouraged them to hoard and enhance.

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### Lack of commitment

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FOR APART FROM whatever I felt—it was a great deal—about a student being able to earn a Harvard degree simply by drawing or taking pictures, without ever having to submit to an intellectual discipline, the chief point of the disquiet engendered in me by Alice was my immediate sense that she had no genuine commitment to painting, designing, film-making, or anything else offered by her department, and that she would leave college as little directed to serious professional work as when she had entered it. The basis for this quick judgment was not prescience but an old familiarity with my sex. In her professional fecklessness, Alice was a timeless female example: she could have been myself or one of my classmates of the Twenties. To be sure, in my college time there were no Visual Studies programs to entrap our Alices; her Twenties counterpart, and not alone at Radcliffe but at any reputable women’s college, would probably have majored in English or perhaps in the Romance languages. She would nevertheless have been as little committed as Alice to a work which she was bound to pursue beyond college. Without training in pedagogy she was usually unqualified to teach in an elementary or high school. If she learned shorthand and typewriting, she might get a secretarial job; and if she was particularly lucky this job might be in a publishing house or at a magazine, and thus constitute, if she had majored in English, at least some discernible connection with her privileged education. But whatever the air of earnestness—and, indeed, the real effort—with which we middle-class girls of the Twenties addressed our studies, we were first of all girls of the middle class to whom the society might now offer, as it once had not, educational advantages equivalent to those which were offered men, but who had made no pledge of seriousness to an occupation of our choice. For how could professional seriousness be found in products of a culture which had as one of its deepest assumptions that female independence was, if not a condition of domestic emergency involving the death, bankruptcy, or incapacitation of one’s father or husband, then at least a sign that on some however-hidden emotional level one had ruled oneself out of the marriage market?



But that had been in the Twenties that my parents had passed on to me the dark message that I was to educate myself "in case I ever had to earn my own living," and now was 1971, a time of most strenuous concern, everywhere in our society, on the score of women's freedom. Yet actually how much dissimilarity was there, I had now to ask myself, between the view we had in my day of our professional futures and the view of an Alice? Drastic sexual-social changes had taken place since my undergraduate years. With the invention of the pill and the removal of inhibitions which attended women's fear of unwanted pregnancy, these young women were no longer dependent upon marriage for their sexual gratification. And they had even progressed, if progress it could be called, to the stage where women had been given the head-turning status of an ethnic minority—together with blacks, they were now a test of the moral-political premise on which universities claimed money from the federal government, with the result that jobs which previously they had been denied were being thrust upon them. Yet were there not as many Alices as in my own day, young women as little possessed by their work or perhaps even more adrift than any female generation had been because deprived of recourse to what, in my time, was at least the solid mooring of marriage and motherhood? Granting what was indubitably true, that Radcliffe's population, like that of all private institutions, now included many more students than it once had who were not of the middle class, and granting as well that everywhere on our college campuses the goals of the middle class were being put under a new adversary assessment, it was still the values of the middle class, in all their contradiction and conflict, that created the values of the colleges.

ONE DREAMED of a Tocqueville to deal as it deserves with the subject of America's present-day ambivalence toward the very idea of the middle class, that bulwark of American society which provides the economic sustenance of our idealism at the same time as, all anomalously, it nourishes the most lethal assaults on our security and peace of mind. We despise the middle class as the source and repository of the attitudes which, under the modern liberal dispensation, most anger or frighten us. Yet what is it other than the middle class which is the promised land toward which we wish to move all who are not born its citizens? Wholly without self-consciousness, Radcliffe in the Twenties

looked upon itself as a school for girls of the middle class. The scholarships were few and distributed chiefly among young women whose lack of money was all that separated them socially from their college sisters. And in the Twenties, even for men, a college degree was not the economic sine qua non which it has since become, while for women it was not so much a means of entrance into the middle class as proof that one was already suitably, if not always abundantly, there. Only in the Thirties, in the decade after my college time and with the onset of the Depression, had there come the demand for a new social dispensation based on merit, not simply on money. And only today is the long rule of meritocracy threatened, though perhaps only temporarily, as we turn to the university as an appropriate instrument for making restitution to the minorities for the deprivations and injustices they suffered in the evolution of the American middle class to its present uncertain eminence.

And yet through all these permutations in even our relatively recent historical development, and taking into full account the influences these have exerted on education, one aspect of American middle-class life would seem to have stayed fundamentally constant: the assumption of woman's primary place in the home and therefore of her secondary place outside the home, especially in work which is recognized to give status in the middle class as, say, bank-managing gives status but bank-telling does not, or editing provides status while proofreading does not, or university teaching offers status while public elementary-school teaching does not. I am not sug-

**"One aspect of American middle-class life would seem to have stayed fundamentally constant: the assumption of woman's primary place in the home."**





Diana Trilling  
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gesting that this view of woman's role in culture has itself been unvarying. In periods of war, say, there is always a shift in the definition of what is appropriate for women to do—it was only after 1945, when the GIs had come back to an economy weakened by peace, that culture mobilized itself, through our influential magazines and psychologists and anthropologists, to get middle-class women out of the jobs which a few years earlier they had been urged to take out of patriotic duty; the widespread propaganda designed to persuade women in the late Forties and early Fifties that their mental health lay in devoting themselves to motherhood and the arts of gracious living—to female-ism, as it was called—would have been regarded as subversive a few years earlier, before middle-class America asked for our re-accommodation to male economic dominance. Nor am I suggesting that middle-class America is monolithic or that the line of its development is always easy to trace without hindsight. To refer again to my own college experience: I entered Radcliffe only a short time after women had been given the vote, when one would suppose that young women would still be boldly marked by the militancy of the women's suffrage movement; yet I recall no sign of an awareness that we had attained to a new political responsibility. Of present-day Radcliffe I couldn't of course make the parallel statement that I saw no evidence of the social or political sensibility of our present historical time. On the contrary, today's Radcliffe student is far more alert to the relation between her personal circumstances and those of her society than was my college generation. I nevertheless have the impression—it is nothing I can prove but it is also nothing that someone else can yet disprove—that for the majority of present-day middle-class students at Radcliffe, and at Harvard as well, their current concern for the black and the poor and their wish for a fundamental social renovation will all too soon yield to the sterner imperatives of class, their own class: such, in my view, is the inevitability of historical process. And this generally regressive impulse will include a return of young women to the sexual role determined in their middle-class origins, that of woman's emotional submission to men, a submission most readily made manifest in economic abdication. But the defeat this foretells of our current efforts on behalf of women's liberation cannot, it seems to me, be fairly separated from the defeat of a movement which in its most arresting manifestations has made its appeal to sexual antagonism of a thoroughly destructive kind. I speak, of course, of

a women's liberation movement which has failed to locate and to hold the place where sexual equality supports rather than violates biology.

In other words, what I emphasize is the continuing force of class and its ability to override the only intermittent force of cultural divergence, except perhaps in that small enclave which manages to make itself marginal to class as revolutionaries, artists, or bohemians. It is, if you will, a Marxist-derived view of the supremacy of economic interest over the "free" efforts of culture. But I would also stress the existence of contradictory impulses not only within a single cultural period but also within individuals, particularly in youth. If we are to recognize Alice as representative of her college culture, we cannot overlook those aspects of her character which also make her representative of the middle class on which, so far as women are concerned, influences of this or that cultural moment seem to have little lasting force, no more perhaps than that of a new dance step or a new fashion in hairstyle. For all the "radical" conformity of her dress, which is careless, verging on the unclean, and of her manner, unput-downable, and of her choice of filmmaking as her field of concentration, I foresee of Alice that eventually she will turn out to be much too closely held to her social geography to do more than nibble at the edges of revolt against the kind of womanhood predicated in her middle-class childhood. In order to find the work which would command her fullest professional earnestness she would need the kind of college education which did more than give mere lip service to the idea that women are full members of the professional community—and where is this to be found in a society whose interpretation of the psychobiological differences between men and women has for so long and insidiously been dictated by men? I think it was in my second year as a student at Radcliffe that we were one day addressed at assembly by our then dean who, from the assumption that few of us would put our college educations to professional use, urged us not to consider them for that reason wasted because of our Radcliffe training we would surely be more efficient in the household tasks that awaited us—in dishwashing, instead of scalding the plates one at a time, we would first scrub them all and then pour a kettle of boiling water over the lot; and, able to quote Shelley and Keats at the kitchen sink, our minds would be raised above our sordid occupations. This lady—I now make penance—was for too long a figure of fun in the album of my Radcliffe recollections. Actually



was unique for honesty, and those of us who scorned her prognostications were, I am afraid, more notable for our youthful high-spiritedness than for our self-understanding or our ability to forecast the future.

## Female seduction

**Y**ES, I REMEMBER thinking one night in 1971, in the spring of my return to my old dormitory, after a day in which I had interviewed a half-dozen Radcliffe girls no one of whom struck me as being attached to anything more professionally sustaining than the mysterious and somehow awful knowledge that she was among the intellectually elect of her female generation, some means must indeed be found to rescue this high potential which, into late adolescence, is all shine and hope but which, in the case of most women, will—failing unforeseen economic or social pressure—be all tarnish and empty tokenism within a decade after graduation. But how was this to be done? Especially, how was it to be done today without pushing the colleges still further along their present path of social instrumentalism? After all, ours is a period in which any assault upon established educational attitudes is interpreted as an assault only upon elitism—that horrible antidemocratic belief, as it has come to be regarded, that some people have more intellectual aptitude than others—and when even the movement for women's rights has been commandeered by our wish to eradicate all human differences, including those of biology. Under the best of recent circumstances, an appeal to women to commit themselves to specific professional goals is sure to be interpreted as an argument against programs in general education or, worse, as capitulation to the power-and-prestige principle of our society. Living in Cambridge the year before my return to my old dormitory, I was invited one evening to a meeting of a Radcliffe student committee on curriculum reform. This was the spring of 1970; less than a year had passed since the revolutionary standard had been raised in Harvard's University Hall—the students were still eager to be participants in the democracy of university administration. The important item on the evening's agenda was the recommendation that all fields of concentration be abolished.

"All of you are concerned with women's jobs?" I finally inquired when I saw that none of the young women at the table was going to object to the recommendation.

There was a chorus of assent.

"But surely you must see that sexual equality rests on economic independence, and that economic opportunity is chiefly a matter of professional competence. No college woman is going to be able to compete with men for jobs if all she has to offer is some kind of vague desire to be employed. . . ."

One of the two male members of the committee interrupted me: "We don't want majors at Harvard either."

From his manner it was clear that he was about to tell me that a new liberated student generation had thrown out professionalism and expertness together with other imperialist impositions. I went on quickly: "Men in our society have strong economic motive to make successful careers. Women do not, not in the middle class. That's why, even more than men, they need to have special fields of competence."

I doubt I persuaded anyone that evening. In speaking of education as tooling for a future in some recognized sphere of work, I had plainly shown myself to be an unfeasible modern instance. And to make my retrograde appeal in the name of women's freedom was,

**"None of the Radcliffe girls I interviewed that day struck me as being attached to anything more professionally sustaining than the mysterious and somehow awful knowledge that she was among the intellectually elect of her female generation."**



Hans-Georg Rauch



Diana Trilling  
DAUGHTERS  
OF THE  
MIDDLE CLASS

in the minds of my young listeners, to pervert the cause of my sex. Yet, after all, I had myself made the reference to women's lib as glibly as if worlds of consequences didn't separate my own feminist rationalism from the hate-ridden programs of our present movement for female emancipation. Why, then, should I expect these young people to discriminate among all the brilliant temptations being offered them by their moment in history, not least the promise of a "new" future, a "new" society, which would provide and sustain whatever it was they would come out of college asking for: peace, love, equality, opportunity without division or struggle? Here was seduction indeed: the instant millennium. And like all seduction as it was traditionally understood, it spelled far greater trouble for the young female than the young male who yielded to it. Coming out of college into the brutal world of economic competition which looks as if it will be our universe for still some time to come, whatever change in the basic pattern of society may be made by changing our educational institutions, eliminating entrance requirements, eliminating examinations, eliminating grades, eliminating required courses, eliminating fields of concentration, the male college graduate will soon enough have to meet the economic challenge of what we call "real" life or else drop out of life entirely—these will be his alternatives. It is the girl graduate who will stay in life but depleted in will, in power, in satisfaction, and all the employment statistics which will be adduced in proof that college women hold this or that percentage of all jobs held will tell us nothing about the miseries these jobholders may suffer through lack of correlation between the capacities they brought with them to college and the kinds of jobs they go on to do.

Yet even if I knew the solution of the problem, which I did not, I had no heart to tell these highly developed, self-confident young people sitting at their committee table what were more and more coming to seem to me to be the indicated alternatives to the professionalism they so much despised: no college at all—and what, I asked myself, was so world-shattering about that?—or education for honest living, honest female living within the middle class, which would confront the dispiriting truth that most women, whether or not they are aware of the life-decision they have already made, come to college on no firmer motive than to exercise their minds for a bit longer than if they had terminated their educations at high school. Again I looked back on my own college days to see that surely what had

been wrong with my education had not been the necessity it put upon me—I had majored in art history—to know who had decorated the courts of the French kings or who had picked up what influences on the pilgrim routes to St. James of Compostela. The absorption of what would now no doubt be regarded as irrelevancies had been my way of learning about the past, and I was grateful beyond measure for even such diluted instruction as this in the terrible and wonderful history of Western civilization. What *had* been wrong was that I had been led to suppose that a woman need only have the same education as a man in order to have, and make, the same choices in life. It was this which had been a deception of some magnitude and practiced as it was not merely on my own but on several generations of young college women, I held it responsible for much that was and is nervous, lost, disoriented, ungenerous, and, not least, histrionic in our best-educated female population, even—or, perhaps, especially—as it approaches middle age. The histrionism of the present-day American woman, the mimetic self-dramatization which she offers as a form of sexual charm, is a great unexamined scourge in our society. But how should a woman frustrated in the belief that she is special among her sex, at once more gifted, more energetic, and destined for more accomplishment than the general run of women, *not* be impelled to act out in gesture and facial expression the phantasies of personal distinction stimulated in her in her youth but sustained not at all by her later experience of life?

**I**F ALICE studied law, or went to medical school, the probability is that she would be saved these dramatics of a life of wasted opportunity. If, on the other hand, she graduated into some never-never world where a taste for sketching was supposed to combine with a knack for taking pictures to forge a satisfying career, I foresaw for her only the future of scraping together some kind of make-do life from the bits and pieces dealt out to her by fortune. To be sure, she could opt for no career at all: there were women for whom their accomplishment as wives and mothers was still sufficient gratification, all they wished of life. But were many of them likely to have found their way to Radcliffe? I would suppose that a process of natural selection was already at work here to put the stamp of restlessness and unachieved aspiration on most of these girls I interviewed. Obviously there were dan- (Continued on page 92)



# SELLING OFF THE OLD SOUTH



The dream of progress settles on the Tombigbee River

by Johnny Greene

SO THE STORY GOES, through local and regional lore, on March 1, 1887, the *William H. Gardner*, a side-wheeled river steamer, made the deep blind bend first and then opened up its engines again full throttle for the long straightaway. Fast behind the

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*Johnny Greene, a free-lance writer, lives in Alabama.*



*Gardner*, the *D. L. Talley* swept into sight as it cleared the bend and blared its whistle. The two boats were high-water drag racing down the flooded Tombigbee River in west Alabama and the *Gardner* was winning the race. It had been loaded that morning in Columbus, Mississippi, to the top of its guardrails with cotton consigned to Mobile, Alabama. Heavier than the *Talley*, the *Gardner* had an easier time navigating the swollen river as the two boats shot by the mouth of the Sipsey River and past China Bluff where sheer white cliffs rise from the brown water.

Approximately four miles south of Gainesville, Alabama, where the river had widened out of its banks and covered a sandbar, a fire broke out on the *Gardner*, spreading through the cotton in a matter of minutes. The *Gardner* careened toward the bank of the river and hit the submerged sandbar. In the panic and confusion aboard the burning boat, twenty-two people died. Eight of them were members of my family, five of whom were children under the age of ten.

I learned of the riverboat wreck in the 1950s, when I was a child growing up in Demopolis, Alabama—the town on the Tombigbee River from which the *Gardner* had set off that morning on its voyage to Columbus. But the details came to me only in fragments, disjointed references from con-

versations between my grandmother and her white-haired brothers; or through whispered, confusing asides from my cousin Helen Rembert, whose parents and an older brother and sister, aunt and three double first cousins had died in the wreck.

I often went to Helen's to watch the magic lantern. She sat on the sofa and stared trancelike into the fireplace in the front parlor of a house that hadn't been painted in sixty years. Her two middle-aged sons debated with one another as they pieced together a model airplane. Her husband studied the blueprints for his myriad projects that would never extend beyond the dining-room table, where the corners of the blueprints were held down by crystal salt cellars.

I took the magic lantern to a spot beside the tall windows, where the sunlight was better. Between pictures of the U.S. Capitol, high-masted sailing ships, European castles, and English country houses, I watched my relatives through the magic lantern. They were upside down.

I said: "Did they ever find out how the fire started?"

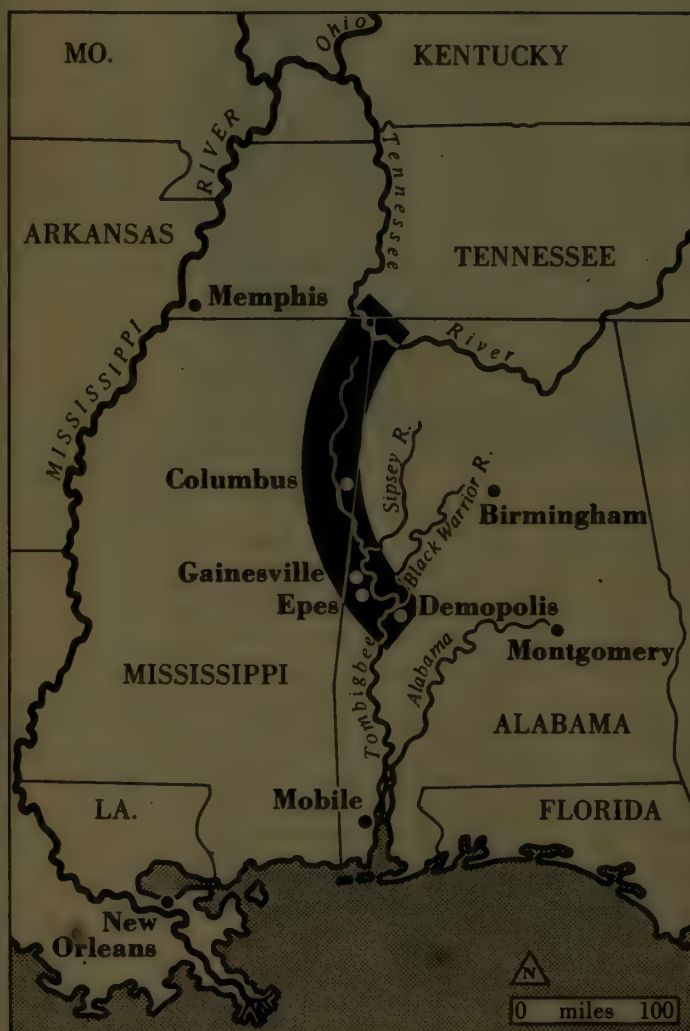
"I saw them again last night," Helen said. She had a low, soft voice that would grow stronger as she talked. "They were across a ravine from me. Everything on their side was green and fresh and all the leaves on the trees were new. Nothing was dead. There wasn't a single dead leaf anywhere. All the people who died on the boat were over there. Other people I knew when I was a child were with them. They were all young and beautiful again. They were laughing and talking but none of them had seen me. I went down as close to the water as I could. Then mama looked up and saw me and smiled. She was wearing a long white gown. She walked down to the edge of the water and held out her hand for me. I was walking toward mama and reaching out for her hand when the vision left me and they all went away."

I never again asked questions about the boat wreck. I realized that the dozen different explanations I had been given were all contradictory; they were also a subterfuge for the family's unrelenting grief over a disaster that had taken place more than fifty years before, and a procrastination as real as the unpainted house for reconciling that grief.

## Migration

Our family had come to Alabama to settle alongside the Tombigbee River, to cast its future and its fate on the vagaries of a narrow stream that rose in a muddy brown mass to the tops of trees in winter, and then sank to a shallow, dark green creek across which men rode their horses in summer. Alabama was then a part of America's Western frontier, and my relatives had joined the columns of migration from

Don Ryan



Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway project



the Eastern Seaboard that followed each of the early nineteenth-century "panics." The river was a magnet to them and to the thousands of other settlers who left their homes behind as they moved onto the flat coastal plain transected by the Tombigbee and into the eddies and hollows and sloughs and creek bottoms that sustained the river.

"Emigrants from Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee and Kentucky poured into the valleys of the Alabama and Tombigbee [rivers] without waiting for the sales of the lands," wrote George Strother Gaines, the first member of our family to migrate to Alabama, in 1804. As United States Factor to the Indians—an Indian agent—Gaines had mapped, charted, and explored the Tombigbee. He had successfully negotiated the treaties by which the resident Choctaw Indians of the region came to be removed from their homes and lands to make way for the white settlers.

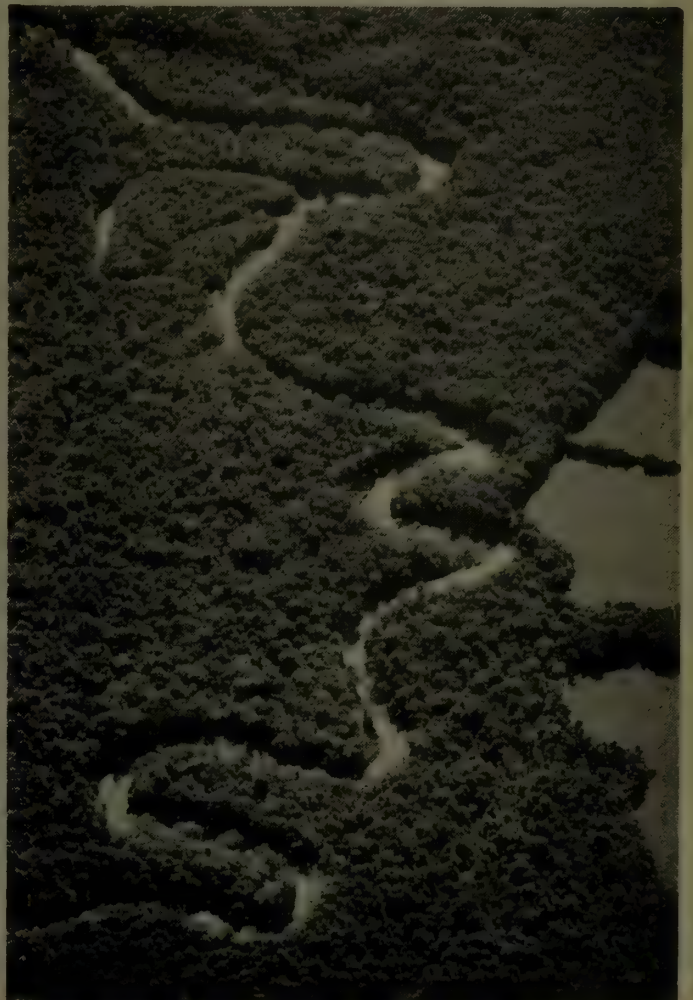
In 1815, with the recommendation of his friend, a Choctaw Indian chief named Pushmattaha, Gaines moved his Indian Trading Post from the Lower Tombigbee near Mobile upriver to the ruins of a military outpost that had been held by the French during their control over the valley. Gaines had followed his older brother, Edmund Pendleton Gaines, an army officer, into the region, and was present when Edmund Gaines captured Aaron Burr and held Burr prisoner in the territory. But, unlike his brother, a blindly ambitious man who would eventually survive a court-martial for organizing his own army in the South, George Gaines was a much-respected and self-effacing man, a pioneer who led a region through the early years of confusing settlement. The migrations continued almost to the day the first guns were fired on Fort Sumter and all that Gaines had worked to create was destroyed by the Civil War.

In 1836 Elizabeth Rogers Poellnitz walked to a window of her home near Darlington, South Carolina, and looked for a last time at the familiar landscape. Outside, her husband and two youngest children waited in wagons and carriages already loaded for the six-week, cross-country trip to Alabama. She was forty-six years old at the time, her husband almost sixty. Ahead of them lay the wagon and carriage traces of the migrations, the paths worn down into trenches through the Carolina Piedmont and the Appalachian foothills that led them into what they knew as "the Alabama and the Mississippi." Their destination was a series of low hills, known as Rembert Hills, which overlooked the Tombigbee River south of its confluence with the Black Warrior River, its major tributary. Elizabeth's two oldest sons had already migrated there and acquired the first of the river-bottom land patents on which they would build their farms. Standing at the window, she took off her engagement ring and with the diamond scratched her initials and the date onto the windowpane and left the house.

The letters of her daughter, written from Rembert Hills, speak of a town of the Civil War—of chronic shortages of staples and supplies that no longer passed upriver from blockaded Mobile to their village. Before Elizabeth Poellnitz Rembert died in 1862, a few months after her husband, wounded at Shiloh, died as a prisoner of war in St. Louis, her letters graphically depicted the hapless South. There was no material, she wrote, to make a "soldier's shirt" for her oldest son—who died in 1865, near the end of the Civil War.

Twenty-five years later, in the first mirage of the South's economic recovery from the Civil War, a grandson of the woman who had scratched her initials into the windowpane took his wife and children to the riverboat landing at Demopolis. A first cousin of his was a part-owner of the riverboat *Gardner*. The two men, both thirty-three years old, had married sisters—nieces of George Strother Gaines—and both men had invested in the cotton trade to Mobile, renewed now after the war. They had planned a day's outing for their families as they went upstream on the flooded river to collect the load of cotton.

Each time I went to the Tombigbee, instinct forced me to look upriver as far as I could until it disappeared behind one of its blind bends. Up-





stream, north of Demopolis, north of Epes, where Gaines had built his trading post, lay the rotting hull of the old steamer *Gardner*. There, descendants of Elizabeth Rogers Poellnitz and George Gaines, trapped in the panic of the boat's fire, had thrown their wives and children overboard to keep them from being burned alive. They had died in tragedy near a town that had been named for Gaines in triumph.

To me the history of the river and the recent history of my family had become inextricable in the years in which I grew up in Demopolis. The wreck of the *Gardner* was one moment in that history, but it shattered my family's illusion that it had recovered what it had lost in the war. The wreck's dimensions were so exaggerated that when our thoughts or our conversations turned to the Tombigbee, they were dominated by the legend of the *Gardner*.

**I** LEARNED EARLY ON that the river's legends were not to be trusted. They gave me a sense of identity with the river, however, and shaped the love I felt for it into the kind of respect one feels toward the most consistent of friends.

My respect for the river and the position of authority ascribed to it was part of a broader system of agrarian values and stoic priorities I inherited from my family. When I was a child we still lived by the rules of an agrarian society. Those rules were built around the land and reverence for the land. Within our remote, undeveloped, preindustrial region of Alabama, there remained a mutual dependency on the land and its yield that was shared and understood and unspoken by everyone. A period of unfavorable weather did not bring hardship to only one farm family but reverberated through the entire economy of the place. A chain of dependency stretched out from the land, from the cotton farms and cattle pastures, and held together the tradesmen—merchants and bankers—and the professional men of the clergy, the military, the law, and medicine. But above all, land was sovereign and it bestowed sovereignty on its owners.

Within old Southern families there existed a fixed belief in hierarchy of creation, a conviction that the right to own land and to rule had been invested in them. But out of this concept of their inherent sovereignty over their own lands and over the South itself came what they understood to be their responsibilities of leadership. The Southern system of ethics demanded of those who ruled that they behave in a just and decent and gracious fashion to those over whom they took precedence.

An entire system of exaggerated and frequently oblique manners emanated from this paternalistic *noblesse oblige*. But when this system of courtly manners came to characterize the South to others, it disguised the foundation on which it had been

raised. And behind that deception is one of the first clues to understanding what would take shape as the "New South."

Within the Southern system there was no white middle class. There were the old families who still governed through their interconnected oligarchy, and there were the blacks who had been owned by them as property. A sense of duty required that the blacks be treated as men of dignity whose needs and demands, however meager, were an obligation to be met by their former owners. And between the blacks and the old white aristocracy of the South there existed the fragile truce signed for peace and coexistence. Omitted from this truce and its provisions were the countless thousands of lower-class poor whites.

They were known as "rednecks" or "white trash." William Faulkner gave them the name of Snopes. There was no implied stoic obligation to them. They existed in an undefined category, a restless limbo whose potential as a threat to the delicate, carefully manipulated balance of the system was an unspoken but rampant fear. They first broke through the barriers of Southern caste and class when they emerged after 1900 as the lower middle class. By the 1950s they were the middle class of the South. Their emergence was political, and their arrival shattered the agrarian precepts and stoic values of the older South.

Within our remote section of Alabama, when I was young, the river was part of a landscape I had been taught to revere and to protect. I did not realize the system by which we lived would soon collapse and be replaced by another, more impersonal system, which would claim as one of its victims the Tombigbee River itself.

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### Southern strategy

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**M**UDDY BROWN IN WINTER and dark green in summer, the Tombigbee unfolded out of a thousand blind curves and oxbows, each revealing another of the river's predictable and subtle varying faces—its hardwood forest swamps, its sandbar peninsulas, and gravel-bar islands—in monotonous continuity on its 384-mile-long journey to the sea. Walls of cypress, sycamore, and oak extended for hundreds of yards in some stretches, miles in others. They were broken by the limestone cliffs, the narrow black mouths of creeks, the eyes of a dozen deer at the water's edge.

The Tombigbee could still be explored when I was growing up in Demopolis in the 1950s and early 1960s. The dredging of the river south of Demopolis by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had not yet begun, collapsing and eroding the riverbanks, eating into its rich hardwood swamps and sandy bluffs. Plans to destroy the river north of Demopolis and convert it into a 253-mile-long, zero-



current barge canal to be called the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway were still as remote and unrealistic as my cousin William's dining-room-table blueprint dreams.

By the spring of 1971, however, all of that had changed. The Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Project had been resurrected from a twenty-five-year oblivion by Richard Nixon and incorporated into his "Southern strategy." This plan to connect the north-flowing Tennessee River to the south-flowing Tombigbee River with a barge canal had been rejected by Congress countless times. Congressional staff studies found the costs prohibitive, the benefits to be derived from the waterway negligible. However, Nixon recognized the project's potential patronage benefits to entrenched, conservative Southern Senators and Congressmen. He authorized the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Project to broaden still further the Southern base of support that would remain loyal to him until the end of his Presidency, the Waterway bringing into his fold such influential men as Sen. John Stennis of Mississippi, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Public Works Appropriations; Sen. James Eastland of Mississippi, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee; Sen. John J. Sparkman of Alabama, a member of the Senate Banking Committee and chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Sen. James Allen of Alabama, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee; Rep. Joe L. Evins of Tennessee, head of the House Subcommittee on Public Works Appropriations; and Rep. Robert E. Jones of Alabama, chairman of the House Public Works and Transportation Committee—which had jurisdiction directly over the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Project. Rep. Jamie Whitten of Mississippi, a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee, also joined in this alliance, along with Rep. Jack Edwards of Alabama, Sen. William E. Brock of Tennessee, and Rep. Tom Bevill of Alabama.

At what will eventually be a cost of, a conservative estimate, \$4 billion to the taxpayers of the United States, the Nixon Administration authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to transform the Tombigbee River into a barge canal.

Rising in the molehills of northeastern Mississippi, approximately 100 miles south of the Tennessee River, the Tombigbee flowed out of a series of small creeks and began its southeasterly course through Mississippi and Alabama to its confluence with the Mobile River north of Mobile. Wholly contained within the two states of Mississippi and Alabama, the northern half of the river had never been navigable by commercial traffic. The section of the river from Columbus, Mississippi, south to Demopolis, Alabama, was navigable commercially during the winter, high-water months. And from Demopolis south to Mobile, the river was navigable year round by riverboats.

But because the creeks of its headwaters were within 100 miles of the Tennessee River, it was said that a canal could be cut through the 800-foot-high ridgeline hills from the creeks of the Upper Tombigbee into the Tennessee River system. Locks and dams would be constructed on the Tombigbee north of Demopolis to impound the narrow creek of a river, dredging would widen the riverbed to a uniform width to accommodate barge traffic, its sharp bends and oxbows would be removed, and the Tombigbee and Tennessee Rivers would be connected.

As a plan it seemed simple enough. On the maps, the creeks that flowed together as the Upper Tombigbee were depicted as a single line, as was the Tennessee River. The lines representing the two rivers almost came together on maps of the region. Since the earliest years of settlement of the Tombigbee Valley, traders and merchants had taken their boats upriver as far north as possible, then portaged to the Tennessee River. Connecting the two rivers would mean an end to the long portages.

During the years in which the plan moved through the region, it acquired the attributes one generally ascribes to dreams. What began as an end to long portages soon became a shortcut from the inland center of the United States to the Gulf of Mexico at Mobile, an alternative to the traditional water route down the lower Mississippi River to New Orleans. The dream spread, expanding until the barge-canal shortcut was seen as the start of an economic revolution, a total revitalization of the Tombigbee River Valley.

Like the building of Brazil's Trans-Amazon Telegraph Line in the early 1920s—which, it was predicted, would bring some Brazilian Chicago into the wilderness of northwestern Brazil—the building of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway through sixteen generally remote Mississippi and Alabama backwoods counties was accompanied by extravagant predictions. Though the Trans-Amazon Telegraph Line was rendered obsolete the day of its completion by the invention of the wireless, its supporters remained faithful as the telegraph poles collapsed or were destroyed by Indians to whom the hum of the telegraph wire sounded like the buzzing of wild bees. Proponents of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway remain equally faithful and steadfast to their barge canal, even though the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has already acknowledged it will be economically obsolete almost on the day of its completion.

**T**O ITS PROPONENTS, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway has become a symbol of the century-old faith in economic recovery that characterizes the New South. It is as if to them the Tombigbee River—a minor,



insignificant, partially navigable stream that flows for 384 miles through the two agricultural states of Mississippi and Alabama—had already become more important than the 652-mile-long Tennessee River, the 2,500-mile-long Mississippi River, the 2,714-mile-long Missouri River, the 4,000-mile-long Amazon River, or the 2,900-mile-long Congo River. The waterway has been termed by various Southern Congressmen, Senators, and governors “the greatest economic milestone since the Louisiana Purchase,” “an economic turning point in the Southeast,” “the shortcut to progress,” and, as if to rectify some oversight of Providence or geology that put a ridgeline of hills between two distinct river systems, “the missing link.”

All along the barge canal's stagnant pools of impounded water, it was said, industries would spring up like mushrooms. By reducing travel time from Chattanooga, Tennessee; Paducah, Kentucky; and Sheffield, Alabama, to the Gulf of Mexico at Mobile, the Mobile seaport—the Alabama State Docks—would emerge as “the greatest seaport on the Gulf of Mexico.” In language one would generally associate only with the St. Lawrence Seaway, residents of the sixteen remote counties were promised they would be put on “the main street of the nation's waterway system.” As industries popped up, jobs would be plentiful. As dams were built, “an outdoor paradise of lakes and parks” would be created from the 40,000 acres of stagnant, impounded water and 13,345 acres of land alongside it. And during the construction phase of the waterway, the flow of millions of dollars into the area through construction jobs, housing for workers, purchases of equipment, and salaries would bring an economic boom to dozens of sleepy, dusty small towns and sunbaked, bleached, country-crossroads general stores in places like Aliceville and West Greene, Pleasant Ridge and Pickensville, Gainesville and Aberdeen.

To the residents of an area historically characterized since the Civil War by a lack of industrial development, low educational levels within the population, an absence of job opportunities for its young people, and an economic dependency on agriculture, these generalized, high-glossed benefits ignited the imagination. They stormed forth to support the waterway as recklessly and relentlessly as Faulkner's mole-eyed characters had pursued their “spotted horses.” Perhaps nothing had excited them this much since they poured out of these same nooks and crannies, creek bottoms and river towns, in 1861 to join Robert E. Lee on the long trek to his appointment at Appomattox.

The promise of overnight riches aroused the unquestioning boosterism of the local and regional daily and weekly press. Then, by word of mouth, inhabitants of the towns and villages of the Tombigbee Valley exaggerated the promises still further. By the summer of 1976, the bold, hallucinatory

plan of the waterway had become real in the minds of the people.

With their enthusiasm fanned, they were willing to abandon their homes and their wildlife. It didn't seem to matter that they would lose, among other things; more than 40,000 acres of river-bottom hardwood forests, the diversity of species of fish and mussel and fauna that occur specifically in the Tombigbee River basin, as many as 1,000 archaeological sites containing artifacts of the prehistoric Indian tribes who migrated through the valley, and the entire town of Holcutt, Mississippi. In reaching out for the unattainable promises offered by the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the people of the region were reaching out for a myth, just as my cousin Helen had done that balmy spring afternoon in the late 1950s when she grasped for the proffered hand of her mother, who had been dead since 1887.

### Eternal care

**L**AST JULY, I could already see the river and the white, stubby smokestack of the *Big Bee*, a towboat, as we drove through the deserted lumberyard. The river wrapped around one side of the lumber mill and on this breezeless summer Sunday morning, the surface of the Tombigbee was a silky gloss of dark green, unruffled water. Impounded here in a reservoir by the high Demopolis Lock and Dam, the river spread to a width of at least one hundred yards. As it flowed toward the spillway of the dam, it resembled fibers being drawn through a weaving machine.

The *Big Bee*, her two rust-red empty barges, and her derrick barge were tied to their weather-beaten wooden landing near the tall, steel gray building that housed the sawmill. The captain of the *Big Bee* and his deckhand cook who lived on the *Bee* during its trips, and the three black men who lived and worked on the derrick barge, were making ready to shove off downriver on a four-day trip to a hardwood logging camp near the Coffeeville, Alabama, Lock and Dam.

I had worked here at Miller Lumber Company in Demopolis during teen-age summers and my first trip downriver to Mobile had been aboard the *Bee*. Now in returning to the *Bee*, I was going to one of those varied places in our lives we remember as home. The *Big Bee* pushed barges of logs up and down the Tombigbee to Demopolis. Huge trunks of oak, hickory, sycamore, elm, and gum cut and trimmed by logging camps all along the river, from out of its swamps, were delivered to Demopolis by the *Bee* and also on long, rattling log trucks. The logs were transported by forklift trucks into the sawmill and cut into boards. The boards were then taken to a stacking machine, where they were stacked in layers with sticks between each layer. From the stacking-machine this green lumber went into the



kilns for fast-drying or onto the vast lumberyard to be air-dried. Once they were dried, they were brought to us, and we dismantled the stacks as each board was graded.

In the pastel light of dawn we tightened dew-wet heavy chains that held the packages of lumber onto the flatcars and watched the cars pulled along our spur line toward the main railroad lines. The trains moved away from us, from the sawmill and the river, away from one of the South's last remaining wildernesses. Oak for the flooring of thousands of three- and four-bedroom ranch-styled, mini-columned, split-leveled, and mortgaged homes, each indistinguishable from the next, moved from our remote lumberyard to the air-conditioned silence of Dixie's new sterile suburbs. Furniture processed from our hardwood filled the "Early American," "French Provincial," and "Italian Renaissance" living rooms, bedrooms, and Astroturf-lined family room-dens of tract homes that spiraled in unplanned, unchecked sprawls into the countrysides surrounding Memphis and Atlanta, New Orleans and Mobile, Birmingham, Nashville, and Jackson, Little Rock and Charlotte, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, and Montgomery, Tampa, Columbia, and Jacksonville. Gunstocks fashioned from our rare, black hickory went atop the prefabricated, ornamental fireplace mantles of these same homes. And coffins from our red oak went into the earth in the new streamlined, tombstoneless graveyards advertising "Eternal Care and Protection"—cemeteries that now separated one identical suburb from the next in the way natural boundaries of rivers, creeks, hills, and streams might have done if they had not been removed in the South's relentless impulse to duplicate the mistakes of the rest of the country.

As a teen-ager, summer vacation and weekend part-time worker, I was at times the only white person, other than the bosses and the managers, in the lumberyard. My pay was the same minimum wage as that of the hundreds of older black men who worked there daily, year round, to support their families. Dismantling the stacks of lumber amid dust storms kicked up by the heavy log trucks and forklift trucks and straddle trucks, we turned our faces from the dirt and dust and looked at the river, at its sheen of unruffled water, as if it held some alternative.

My early training in the handling of boards was entrusted to Frank, a towering coal-black man who died several years ago. It was difficult to win his trust and confidence because the world of the white man, then and now in Demopolis, had oppressed and embittered him, and kept him, while free, enslaved all his life. And I have not given his surname because the black men with whom I worked and their wives and children still have to face a white man's dominion and paternalism that I have seen swing too often and too recently into an unalterable vindictiveness.

**P**OWDERED WITH THE DUST from boards we had just packaged, Frank and I stood beside the kiln's cooling shed, near a cone of smoking sawdust. The sun had not come up yet but the mill and the lumberyard were emerging slowly out of the darkness into a pale, mist-enshrouded half-light. Frank was still brusque with me, because a few minutes earlier, when we had gone for drinking water, I had not cupped my hands under the spigot but had drunk instead from the mayonnaise jar used by the blacks.

Frank said, "That's all your color wants is to make trouble for us."

"My hands were dirty," I said.

Frank moved away from the high ledge of the cooling shed. He stood facing the river, his hands in his pockets.

"The Man see you do that when I'm 'round and he gonna fire my ass, not yours."

I apologized.

"That ain't what I meant," Frank said. He turned and smiled and said: "Jest always make sure the Man ain't 'round when you do that. Okay?"

He sat beside me on the ledge, and we watched a tugboat pushing six barges of coal downstream. Its searchlight fanned the river as its pilot kept it in the center of the stream. A deckhand wearing a white apron stood in the kitchen door on the first deck. His shape was outlined by a bald light bulb hanging behind him.

"I wish I was on it," I said.

Frank said: "That's her, baby. The river. She's wide and she's deep and she's mean."





I looked down at the surface of the water, not yet touched by morning sunlight. The river was still pitch black.

I said: "I can swim."

Frank laughed as we walked into the warehouse to dismantle another hot stack of lumber. "That's what all your color claim. Then let 'um hit the water and see what happens."

I said: "What happens?"

He laughed again, showing his teeth. He picked up the tip end of a board and dropped it onto the package we were building and it landed with a snap.

"That's what happens. They're gone when they hits the water. Can't nobody swim out of no whirlpool or the suction down them banks. And don't nobody tries to neither 'cept your color. They jest don't understand no river."

As the sunlight spread across its surface, the river turned from pitch black to dark green. All along the river's wide bend the white cliffs rose from the water like a wall. A ribbon of limestone stretched for miles between the water and the overhanging vines and foliage growing on the banks.

I said: "I'm not falling over any cliffs."

Frank snorted and slapped another board into place on the package. He said: "If you does, I'll jest say, 'So long, ole buddy.'"

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### Caste and class

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**T**WELVE YEARS LATER, on a summer Sunday morning in 1976, I tossed my gear onto the deck of the *Big Bee* and climbed down the rickety wooden steps of its landing.

The captain said: "Watch your step coming down."

He was wearing a bright orange baseball cap, and he leaned through the open door of the pilot's cabin on the poop deck.

Dark, greenish-brown water slushed against the suction base of the embankment. The river was probably more than forty feet deep here. I balanced myself on the stub of a staircase post shredded by age and the torrential currents of the Tombigbee at flood stages. For a few moments I paused and remembered that morning with Frank and other similar mornings at the lumber mill.

I had been one in a long succession of white boys chosen to work at Miller Lumber Company. By what means we were selected I was never sure. Some came from homes far richer than mine, others were children of the rapidly emerging Southern middle class. In a sense, that succession of white-boy workers was like a line drawn through the layers of a Southern social, political, and economic structure which had already given way, years before I was born, into an alliance between the old white Southern aristocracy and the new middle class.

For both sides it was an alliance for survival. With its stoicism, its respect for the land, its abhorrence of trade and yet its unavoidable participation in it, and its self-assurance that it was some distinct, chosen class, the old white Southern aristocracy found itself by the end of World War II mired in an agrarian economic system in which it could not compete with the desperately upwardly mobile class of whites it had held in check for more than a century. Old ways were swept aside when the South came to the full realization that the old oligarchy had lost its hold. In the face not so much of extinction but of repudiation of all for which they had stood, the old families capitulated to the new system of politics and economics.

The old social lines of demarcation drawn by poverty were no longer operative. There was money in the South in those years, to be sure, but the majority of the old families fell under the regionally appropriate category of "land poor," and their elaborate system of manners masked their dependency on an agrarian economy of low-yield productivity and an undeveloped, untouched wilderness of boundless natural resources they did not know how to exploit. When the old families of the South were reduced to giving "ice-water receptions" for the other members of their land-poor gentry, they were propping up the South's romantic perception of its former prerogative to extravagance. But that extravagance was lost years before Ellen Glasgow ever drank ice water at a debutante reception or William Faulkner saw the first Snopes spit tobacco behind the desk in a bank previously controlled by an aristocrat. And by the late 1950s and early 1960s, the alliance for economic survival had become a scramble for money between the aristocrats and the Snopeses, who were now indistinguishable one from another economically, politically, and, to some extent, socially. An indifference of classes had finally come to a stratified South like a cold breeze from afar.

I could have become another in the long line of lumber-mill white boys to leave for college and return home as a lawyer or merchant or agribusiness farmer, I guess. But I didn't. And I only regretted not having done so once. On a dry-hot September night in 1971, for a few frightened moments, I wanted to be one of them, secure in some all-white Dixie suburb. I wanted to forget everything Frank had taught me, not about boards and building packages of hardwood lumber and the beauty of crossing the Tombigbee on a ferry to report for work at dawn, but about being human.

**E**N ROUTE TO A civil-rights march that morning, I had crossed the Tombigbee River at Epes, Alabama, rather than Demopolis, and headed south into the rural, remote hardwood and pulpwood country of Sumter and



Choctaw Counties on the Alabama-Mississippi line.

I was going to Butler—a drowsy, Alabama country-frontier town only a few miles inland. A twelve-year-old black girl had been killed there when a white man rammed his pickup truck into a Butler street sit-in. Her funeral and the long, slow, sad march behind her coffin—borne through the streets of Butler in a mule-drawn wagon—were like many other civil-rights funerals and marches I had attended, and would attend in later years. That night I sat on the floor of the Butler courthouse hallway, outside the offices of the elected officials of Choctaw County, and I shielded my eyes less from the glaring fluorescent light fixtures than from the hate- and rage-puffed faces of the white vigilantes of that county.

My hands shook. I had trouble lighting cigarettes. I was more frightened than I had been when I marched on the streets or drove, tailed by pickup trucks, on lonely Alabama and Mississippi back roads.

Feet shuffled, echoed down the tiled walls of the hallway. Sheriff's deputies—quickly and hastily deputized to make them sanitized vigilantes—poked cigars and cigarettes into their mouths as they stood in a clump at the far end of the long hallway. A group of local blacks were there negotiating with Butler town fathers for a few concessions. It would be meaningful, the negotiating blacks explained, if white clerks stopped referring to adult black customers as “boy” and “aunty.”

I rested my forehead on my knees. One of the deputies made a remark about the hippie at the end of the hall. My hair was short. I was wearing a jacket and tie. I wanted to be miles away from this.

The white Choctaw County clerk had come to where I was sitting. The clerk squatted across from me. With him was one of the vigilante-deputies, chewing gum, a Good Ole Boy preening on the sharp edge of his malevolence.

“How long you plan on staying?” the clerk said.

“Until they finish negotiating in there.”

“A lot of whites around here were pretty upset when they saw you marching with their colored,” the clerk said.

“It weren’t the white men so much as the white women marching,” the redneck said.

“You better be careful ’round here,” the clerk said.

I put my forehead back on my knees and ignored them. The day had been cloudless and the glare of the sun as we had driven back to Butler two days after the funeral march had been blinding. My eyes were sore. I had cut a second day of classes at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa to be here.

The clerk said: “You might wind up in jail if you’re not careful.”

I nodded.

The clerk said: “No telling what might happen in there.”

It was one of the lamer threats I had received.

I said: “For every one of us you arrest, five more will come to take our places.”

That was a bold lie in those final, faltering days of the civil-rights movement. The coalition of conscience which had once assembled, unified and proud, to shake a nation at a bridge in Selma had been decimated, if not actually raided and ravaged, by the antiwar movement. The nation’s attention had shifted away from civil rights to the immediacy, and media-attracting antics and drama of a campaign to stop the war in Asia.

The clerk said: “We’ll arrest them, too. Rent the stockyards and put ’um in pens if we have to.”

I said: “If you don’t go away now and leave me alone until those negotiations are over with, I’ll personally see to it that Butler, Alabama, is turned into the second Selma.”

It was a foolish bluff but it worked. If I had struck the county clerk across his fatigued face, I don’t think he would have recoiled any faster. He jerked himself to his feet and, gaining composure through his belligerence, marched away with the same heel-clicking bravado of the vigilante-deputies.

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### Stately progress

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I LEFT CHOCTAW COUNTY late that night, slumped down on the back seat of an automobile driven by a white priest. While I had been at the courthouse, he had been singing and clapping at a black church on the other side of town. We sped across the Tombigbee again at Epes and the white chalk outcropping looked dusty yellow in the moonlight.

I had not been back to Butler after that, never considered going there until the Sunday morning in 1976 when I climbed aboard the *Big Bee*, and asked Cecil Fields, the captain, about our destination.

Fields said: “Logging camp about two miles north of the Coffeeville Lock and Dam.”

He was studying the river upstream from us. “It’s between Jackson and Butler,” he said.

Squawking noises followed by a man’s garbled voice came over the *Bee*’s two-way radio. The radio was on a ledge behind Fields in the pilot’s cabin. We were in radio contact now with the lock tenders at the Demopolis Lock and Dam, a couple of miles downstream. Out front on the two empty barges and on the derrick barge on our right, the deckhand-cook, the three black log workers, and the derrick operator made ready to cast off from the landing.

From instinct, I said: “I hope we don’t have to go ashore down there while they’re loading logs.”

“Not unless you want to,” Fields said. His eyes moved quickly as he scanned the embankment, the barges, the river, and the opposite, low-lying marshy shore. “Nothing down there anyway but a logging



swamp," he said. "What's the matter, you don't like that area or something?"

I said: "Nothing in particular."

I went out onto the poop deck and stood at the railing. The *Big Bee* slid easily, almost effortlessly away from its rickety wooden landing and made for the center of the river.

"You can turn two barges and the boat around within this length, give or take a foot or two," Fields said, after we had straddled the width of the river.

There wasn't another boat in sight in either direction. We were fully athwart the river. With the two empty barges tied up front and riding high on the water—they draw five-and-a-half feet empty, seven-and-a-half feet loaded—and the derrick barge lashed to the starboard side, we were 165 feet long. The *Bee's* engines churned a white froth of the water behind us as we made forward-backward, forward-backward jerking and halting maneuvers that brought the boat and its barges completely around and turned us south, pointed downstream. With engines full-throttle, we stayed close to the high, east embankment for the approach to the Demopolis Lock and Dam.

The wide sheen of seemingly placid water backed up immediately behind the spillway of the dam mirrored the cloudless sky, the tallest of the riverbank's willows and sycamore and birch, the *Bee* and our faces as we stood on the poop deck and heard for the first time the roaring of the Tombigbee as it poured over the spillway in a 600-foot-long spray of water. And after we had passed through the lock chamber and been lowered more than thirty feet onto the trickle that is the Tombigbee in comparison to the Demopolis Reservoir behind us, the spillway looked like a lace curtain puffed gently by the wind.

Ahead of us on the narrow river a speedboat made sharp turns. Fishermen sat on the sandy banks sloping down to the water's edge. Along the broad, man-made shoals extending from the dam's spillway, dozens of other fishermen in light skiffs cast their lines through the white spray.

"Lock Four. The *Big Bee* is southbound, Lock Four," Fields said into the two-way radio, and he grinned and doffed his cap as if in salute.

We passed Foscue Creek and Hall's Creek, Horse Creek and Oasage Bar, sorghum fields and cattle pastures and tall white bluffs. Downstream we moved on the dark-green water, deeper into the last remaining stretch of the Deep South's remote frontier wilderness, bound for our first night's stop at Turkey Creek, near the logging camp. We had not yet met another towboat as we rounded the river's blind bends, but a gradually perceptible sputtering on the two-way radio indicated that a boat moving upriver, miles below us, would soon be passing.

"The downstream boat has the right-of-way," said Fields, and he leaned back in his high-legged stool of a pilot's chair. "A tow is a lot easier to handle going upstream. You can stop on a dime going up-

stream. But if you're coming down and you got a load, it'll take you two miles to stop."

"*Big Bee* to the *Wisconsin*. *Big Bee* to the *Wisconsin*. You read me?" said Fields into the two-way radio.

"Here's the *Wisconsin*, *Big Bee*. Come in."

"Where you at?" Fields asked.

"I'm down here at Shady Grove. Where're you?"

"Just now passing Black Bluff Landing," said Fields.

"I'll be looking out for you then, *Big Bee*."

They signed off and Fields turned to me. Fields had spent twenty-four of his forty-four years on the water, most of them stationed in the South with the Coast Guard. For three years now he had piloted the *Big Bee*, having taken over when the *Bee's* local legendary captain, "Sambo" Joiner, retired.

A popular boat on these remote waters, the fifty-foot-long *Bee* had been plying the Tombigbee for the Miller Lumber Company since it was built in 1946, thirty-one years ago. The *Bee* was a familiar sight, its whistle recognizable to the river bank population as it moved up- and downriver pushing its barges of logs, its tall, steam-operated tripod boom rocking atop the derrick barge and resembling the skeleton of a monster-size praying mantis.

Fields said: "In these passing deals, nobody wants to make a mistake because it might be expensive. He'll slow the *Wisconsin* down 'till he gets around that bar. But normally he'd have to stop and wait if I was really pushing it. That's courtesy. We use all the courtesy we can."

We were coming onto Croom's Lower Landing, having passed a long sandbar. I went onto the deck to watch for the *Wisconsin*, within earshot of the constant, radio dialogue going on now between Fields and the other boat's captain.

"You can cut that point if you want to, I'll be over in this pocket out of your way," said the *Wisconsin's* pilot.

Fields left his high-legged chair-stool and stood at the *Bee's* controls.

He said: "One whistle side means he's on your left; two whistle side and he's on the right."

The *Wisconsin* pealed out one long blast of its whistle. The *Bee* answered with two. The riverbanks were dense and lush and the river empty in front of us. Then I saw the *Wisconsin* behind its barges. The boat was in a cove of deep water on the left bank. It looked as if it were treading water. As we drew closer, blue smoke billowed up from the *Wisconsin's* stack. Almost abreast now, with a slow smoothness, the *Wisconsin* turned inward and moved across the mirror surface of the water upstream toward us.

Four red empty barges rode high on the water in front of the *Wisconsin*, and as the two boats passed at a distance of fifty feet, the pilots and crews waved to one another and whistles pierced the thick, uninhabited swamps and forests that stretched back



from the Tombigbee, and I realized I had seen and felt one beat in the timeless rhythm of the river.

Isolated on this remote stretch of water, their barges empty, en route to loading points—one to a coal chute, the other a logging camp—the boats had passed one another with the slow, cautious courtesy of a pavane. It could have been of no more significance than the passing of two automobiles down a deserted highway in Kansas or Oregon, Texas or Kentucky. But with the coming of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, there would no longer be time for a slow, courteous passing of a *Wisconsin* and a *Big Bee*.

Old-fashioned towboats—already a floating anachronism—will soon become quaint relics from the river's history. As the dredging cuts deeper and deeper into the rich hardwood swamps, there will be fewer logs for the *Bee* to push to the sawmill at Demopolis on its barges. When the dredging hits its peak and the mud and slush—the “spoil” as the Corps of Engineers call it—has been spewed out of the river onto 26,050 acres of its banks, directly into the swamps, and 42,100 acres have been inundated, there may be no more hardwood logs for the *Bee* to transport. Six inches of river-bottom mud and sand thrown against the base of a hardwood trunk will kill the tree.

I watched the froth churned by the *Wisconsin's* engines as she moved upstream and listened to the wisecracking banter between Fields and his cook, George Jones, as Fields ordered up a cup of coffee. I looked at riverbanks already dredge-eroded and soon to be dredged out further. The sides of the river were collapsing.

Fields said: “It sure does seem funny to come this far without meeting any boats. Usually you meet half-a-dozen by this time. And you lose ten to twenty minutes on every hour.”

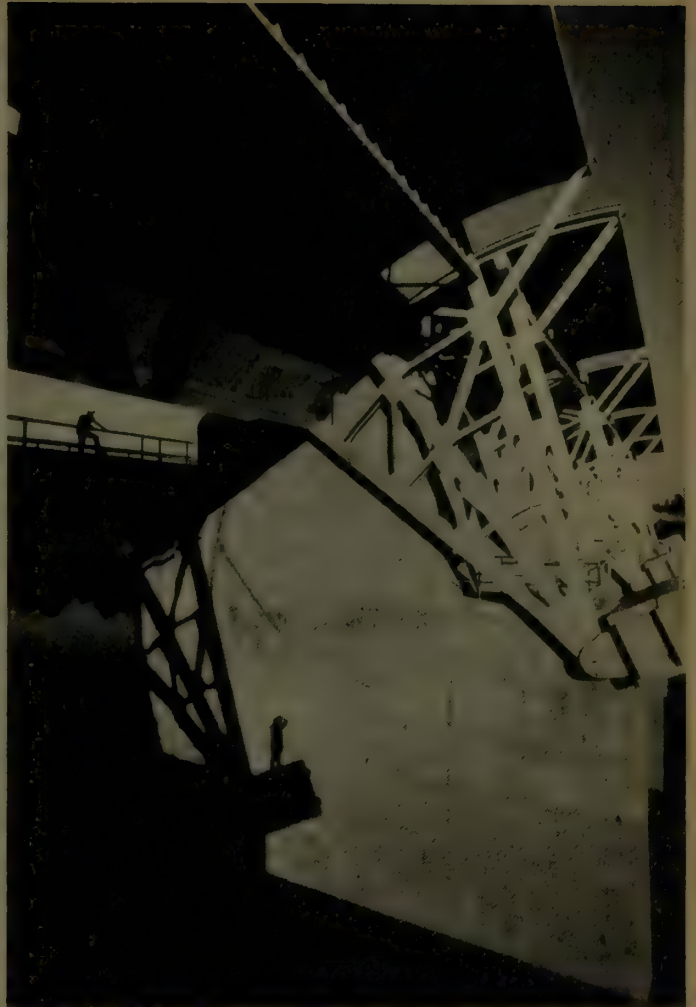
With our mugs of coffee, Fields and I sat in the pilot's cabin. The banks of the river swept alongside. We were making good time now as Fields talked about the river, steering the *Big Bee* as if from instinct.

“Just because you can run a boat,” said Fields, “is no sign you can run the length of the river.”

A line of white egrets, called locally the South Alabama pasture birds, flew in a straight-line formation across the width of the river toward the *Bee*. Then they swept to the side and disappeared behind the thick trees along the banks.

Fields laughed and said: “During a hurricane along the gulf, seagulls come up here. They go in front of the weather, sometimes as far north as Foscue Creek in Demopolis. That's 215 miles from the sea. A long way to fly to keep from getting wet.”

Fields had the *Bee* running wide-open as we passed Cotahager Creek and Double Creek, Lone Brothers' Bar and Shady Grove, Six Mile Creek and Smith Island and Rainwater—the place names of the Tombigbee's history.



Part of the Gainesville dam

**W**ITHIN ITS NATURAL BANKS the Tombigbee was seldom more than 100 feet wide, 10 feet deep. But despite those narrow dimensions, the river had been navigable to shallow-draft side-wheel steamers like the *William H. Gardner* and modern diesel-powered towboats like the *Big Bee* since 1824. That year the steamboat *Cotton Plant* wound its way up the Tombigbee from Mobile to Cotton Gin Port, Mississippi, and inaugurated a local, legendary era of Tombigbee river traffic which was to last 100 years. As keelboats had done before, these river steamers brought upriver from Mobile the slaves who worked the cotton farms that stretched out from the river, and the boats returned with cotton to the seaport at Mobile. These boats tied the remote wilderness of the Tombigbee Valley to the outside world and created a raw and sometimes violent history along the river's steep bluffs and marshy swamps. Riverboat landings grew into villages as customers, traders for the whiskey, pork, and flour carried upriver by the steamboats, were drawn into the lives of the landings. A flourishing river trade that encompassed steamboat crews, local farmers and merchants, and the river's castaway characters sprang up along the Tombigbee. Riverboats and riverboat gamblers, rumrunners and medicine men, pretenders to foreign thrones and fundamen-



talist preachers, and, at one time, a cult of exiled Bonapartists competed for the attentions and the extra cash of the people of the region. The lives the settlers had built for themselves were meager and stark, but the river and its boats gave them excitement.

Most of the Tombigbee's river landings went out with the last of the river's passenger-cargo packets. Travel from town to town was increasingly accomplished by other means—through the improvement of Alabama's public roads and railroads. The shipment of goods upstream and downstream by boat was no longer the flourishing enterprise it had been even as late as 1915, when crates of Coca-Cola were delivered by boat to small-town landings. The introduction of diesel-powered towboats signaled the end to the arrivals and departures of riverboats bearing excitement to isolated towns.

But though the river no longer serves as passage from town to town, its life goes on. The Tombigbee continues to dictate to cattle farmers when they must move their herds to higher ground, children still learn to swim alongside the river's sandbar and gravel-bar peninsulas and islands, and on summer Sunday mornings from distances up to a mile away, the long, slow, plaintive songs of white-robed Baptists can still be heard and sought out, the unaccompanied voices of the church's members rising and falling, carried down the sheer, unperturbed river as effortlessly as the candidates move forward, one by one, to be immersed in the greenish-brown water.

**F**IELDS SAID: "You almost run over yourself going around Beckley's."

Traveling south, downriver, as we entered Beckley's Bar Bend and veered on its first long, gradual turn to the west, I understood the comment Fields had made by watching the golden reflection of the setting sun on the surface of the water. We seemed to be an hour making our way in circles around the oxbows of the bend. And though it was impossible to look directly into the face of the sun, I watched it in the waves that moved outward from the *Big Bee* and the barges. With no seeming pattern as we turned west, then north, then south, then east, then west again, the circle of the reflection of the sun on the water fell on opposite sides of the boat. We were going slowly through narrow curves that could accommodate only one towboat with barges at a time. If we had made radio contact with an approaching boat, it would have had to move to the east side of the river and wait for us to slip from behind the last, blind curve before it could begin its own slow journey north.

Tombigbee River bends like this one at Beckley's Bar and countless others indicate the gradual reduction in coastal plain elevation toward sea level.

Just as they restrain fast towboat and steamboat navigation, they also restrain the river on its flow to the sea. When these bends are eliminated by 200-foot-wide trenches or "cutoffs" which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will dig directly through them, travel time on the Tombigbee will be reduced.

While this is being done to get barge traffic from the Tennessee River to Mobile a day faster than it could reach New Orleans, 70 percent of the predicted barge traffic along the proposed waterway will be strip-mined coal bound from Paducah, Kentucky, to Japan. The remainder of the barge traffic will be made up primarily of empty barges stacked one on top of another—piggy-backed—and towed upstream from Mobile to the Tennessee River.

Dead trees lay in the water alongside the banks as the *Bee* traveled downriver toward Turkey Point, our stop for the night. I climbed down the ladder stairs from the poop deck, crossed the bow, and went out onto the two long barges tied up front. The barges glided silently across the surface of the water, and the only noise was the racket of the insects along the riverbanks.

It reminded me of late afternoons at the lumber mill, when the majority of the men had knocked off work and there were only five or six of us running the stacking machine, and the day's din had halted so abruptly that row after row of drying stacks of lumber seemed to totter in the unexpected silence, and the quiet was broken only by the intermittent buzzing of the cutoff saw which one man was using to cut stovewood. I would walk to the river and sit on its banks, watching the reflection of the setting sun.

Now I crossed onto the *Bee's* barges and her spotlight fanned from bank to bank to hold her in the center of the stream for the night-running. I sat again in the river's silence. The sky was clear and there was an unrestricted view of the stars; the trees and cliffs and bluffs of the riverbanks were like two high walls separating us from the rest of the world.

Isolated here on this remote stretch of the river, I was miles away from Birmingham, where the sides of Red Mountain were being sheared to make room for prefabricated apartment complexes. I felt light-years removed from the glass-encased lakes and streams of Atlanta's hotel lobbies, from the New Orleans Superdome looming over the pastel surface of the French Quarter, from the landlocked yacht club at Tuscaloosa, where I had once been seated a table away from the owners of the New South and listened as they asked one another why no one in Texas had ever thought of landlocking a yacht club before. In one room was a replica of the *Bounty*; in other rooms and on the myriad other floors were antique diver's helmets and ship's artifacts, the prices of which were known to members and quoted to guests. The salt had been scrubbed from all of them. Outside, armed guards kept watch in the night.



**D**OWNSTREAM, BEYOND 100 MILES of as yet unspoiled wilderness and vast tracts of timber and pine, past low, rolling hills through which the Tombigbee ran like a shallow trickle in a trench to its confluence with the naturally deep Mobile River, lay Mobile and its naturally shallow bay. There the whole Southern psyche, as inscrutable as it was transparent, lay poised and waiting in a dreamlike suspension, an infatuation with how fast it could achieve the same "progress" as Birmingham and New Orleans, Atlanta and Nashville.

Mobile had been an old treasure of the South. To Tombigbee River settlers, Mobile had always been "the city," their contact with the outside world, the seat of the authorities who governed them, their dream town on a golden, sunswept bay.

The bay, shaped like a gunstock, had been Alabama's one seaport. The state had invested millions of dollars from bond sales in the building, expansion, and maintenance of docks. A navigational channel through Mobile Bay had been dredged to accommodate the oceangoing vessels that would make the docks pay off. That channel was 40 feet deep, 400 feet wide, and 29 miles long, extending through the bay to the mouth of the Mobile River. And the state docks had been built near the mouth of the Mobile River, at the northern end of the bay. In the 1930s, the Bankhead Tunnel—an automobile and truck tunnel—had been built beneath the bay, south of the docks. It allowed for a draft of forty feet—considered at the time to be adequate for the passage across it of oceangoing vessels. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, two more tunnels were sunk parallel to the Bankhead Tunnel. These two new automobile tunnels, the Lurleen B. Wallace Twin Tubes, were built south of the state docks, between the docks and the open sea, and as oceangoing vessels now draw more than forty feet, Mobile and the state of Alabama rendered their own state docks obsolete. Now bond issues for the "expansion" of the docks south of the tunnels must be passed by the taxpayers of Alabama to allow the relocation of the state docks so that they can service deep-draft oceangoing vessels, vessels which it is said will be moving with increased regularity into Mobile's bay and harbor once the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway is completed.

The isolation of the Mobile state docks is no less inspired than the state's decision in the summer of 1976 to allow oil-drilling in the center of the one narrow, dredged-out navigational channel leading to the docks. And south of Mobile, along the western banks of the bay, away from the sprawling suburbs that have moved further inland, abandoning downtown Mobile to a shell of empty buildings that are landmarks from its earlier, golden age, is the Theodore Industrial Park. Here, the first of the oil domes and chemical plants and oil refineries have been put up. They are the clearest

signals that Mobile is destined to become the grime-encrusted Southern version of Newark, New Jersey.

## Economics and ecology

**W**E PUT THE CANOE IN at Barton's Ferry Access Area near West Point, Mississippi. It is an overgrown shallow creek, navigable only to shallow-draft fishing skiffs and canoes, the ripples of water that stand out midstream at places—especially near the sandbars and gravel-bar islands—marking trees which have fallen into the water not from dredging but from the cycle of nature.

I was in the canoe with Glenn Clemmer, an ichthyologist at Mississippi State University, and Randall Grace, a malacologist who has recently moved back to this area to help fight the waterway. Both men are members of CLEAN—the Committee for Leaving the Environment of America Natural. They are the only organized, outspoken opposition to the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Mississippi and Alabama. Other environmentalist and conservationist groups in the two states have either been mute and turned their backs on the waterway or, like the Alabama Conservancy, issued lame statements questioning its "feasibility."

Clemmer and Grace have taken their collecting bags and jars, their seines and canoe, quietly up and down the river, gathering the indisputable evidence of what will be lost to the waterway.



*The Gainesville lock*



Clemmer said: "We can list 150 species of freshwater fish in the Tombigbee. Here, we'll be losing not so much one species but a whole diversity, which scientifically is more important—how all the species relate to each other, live together, are petitioned out and can survive in one area. Fish are very restrictive in their ranges, their tolerances. Those in a main river will die out due to the locks and dams. The silt kills them. For scientific and educational purposes this won't fit into any cost-benefit analysis. It's hard to weigh economically."

Randall Grace was suntanned like Clemmer from long days on the river. This was to be his 161st mussel collection. Grace said: "The only problem is you can't build up much sympathy for a mussel. You have to bust your ass to find them. You can't see 'um. They're not visible. You have to feel around in the muck and sand and dig them out."

We beached the canoe on a muddy gravel bar that reached down into the water from the riverbank. Grace was out of the canoe in a flash, kneeling against the riverbank, sunk up to his knees in the black mud. He was already pulling mussels out of the mud when I got to him. I went through the shallow water and could see his arms, buried up to his elbows and seemingly stuck in the mud.

Grace said: "I just want you to experience something. Reach in and grab."



Glenn Clemmer and Randall Grace

I stuck my hands into the mud and was sucked into it up to my elbows. The tips of my fingers slid around a ridged surface. I grabbed the shell of a mussel and pulled it out and held it up. With my other hand I pulled out a second, then plunged back in for a third. For an hour we knelt in the water, scrambling about on our knees, digging up to our elbows in the thick, black sucky mud, jerking the mussels out by the dozens. We put them in Grace's collecting bags and pushed off again in the canoe, stopping at a white chalk bluff Clemmer and his friends call Shark's-Tooth Bluff. There, we collected tiny, black, fragile 100-million-year-old shark's teeth that are relics from the Cretaceous period, when the Tombigbee was part of a sea.

We placed the shark's teeth in protective cloth and shoved off again, as Clemmer and Grace described their ongoing battle with the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority, a governmental agency empowered to promote the waterway and its alleged benefits to the region.

Grace said: "The people hear this stuff during the preconstruction phase over and over until it's just instilled in them and they take the word of the people over in Columbus at the 'Tenn-Tom' Waterway Development Authority. Those people are over there spending \$100,000 a year telling the people they want it."

Clemmer slowed the canoe, reached out, and lifted an empty beer can out of the river and laid it in the bow. He said: "We're going to a gravel bar just this side of the Highway 10 bridge. Two years ago seven or eight of my students collected sixty-one species of fish there in one afternoon with three minnow seines. That has to be a North American record."

Ahead of us downstream several miles was our gravel-bar destination. And downstream from there lay Columbus, Mississippi, the headquarters of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority and its administrator, Glover Wilkins.

**I** ALWAYS DREAMED of really having a river comparable to the Tennessee River right here at Columbus," said Wilkins when I visited him in his office in Columbus. "I mean one that we can really use for boating, fishing, and what have you. The Tennessee River was in the same shape before it was developed—just nothing through there. Now it's the showcase of America."

Operating on a budget of more than \$300,000 a year supplied by the taxpayers of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Florida, Wilkins and his staff have worked relentlessly, convincing the people of the area that they will have the Tennessee River transported to Columbus, Mississippi, and drawing up strange schemes for the waterway and the area it transects.

Wilkins was a member of the Columbus, Missis-



Mississippi, Chamber of Commerce when it voted to offer the Tombigbee as an open sewer for refuse and waste emissions to any industry willing to relocate at Columbus. When even the most hardened of industrialists recoiled at the suggestion, the Waterway Development Authority gathered in Columbus and voted unanimously to attract industry to the area by building the waterway as fast as possible. The method they chose was to blast northeastern Mississippi off the face of the map with nuclear bombs.

Though such an alternative may have been less well received in other areas of the country, it was greeted with enthusiasm in Mississippi and Alabama. Daily and weekly newspapers extolled the virtues of nuclear blasts using fissile fuels (uranium 235 and plutonium 239), and producing relatively large amounts of radioactive debris, to build the waterway.

If the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963 had not prevented them, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority would have authorized the elimination of northeastern Mississippi, the evacuation of more than 2,800 families, and an expenditure of \$22 million in civil-defense funds to protect United States taxpayers from their own nuclear bombs. When the test-ban treaty prevented these detonations, the elected officials of Mississippi and Alabama protested that their states' rights were being violated, and petitions were issued to have the treaty rescinded so they could go ahead and kill themselves.

As it is presently authorized and planned, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway will have no flood control or hydroelectric power facilities. At no point along its entire length will it be wide enough to accommodate a barge tow in excess of eight barges north of Demopolis, six south of Demopolis. But regularly, Wilkins and his staff have told the people of the area there will be flood control on the waterway and they have passed out photographs to the local press of barge tows pushing as many as eighteen barges. The authority's press releases are printed unedited in newspapers, thereby misleading the public.

And for the one unsuccessful court case which CLEAN brought against the waterway, the authority staged a campaign throughout the Tombigbee Valley to influence a federal court's opinion against the environmental issues CLEAN raised in the case.

"Nobody'd ever thought about the sort of stuff they brought out in court," said Wilkins when I asked him about the environmental issue, the misleading photographs, and the flood control. He dismissed the photographs as a "mistake."

Wilkins said: "I'm gonna give you a very unorthodox answer about the flood control. We have not claimed any benefits from flood control. But the waterway will take from three to five feet off the crest of a flood."

Later on the afternoon of my visit with Wilkins, I was flown by the Waterway Authority in a private, charter plane to the Tennessee River. The plane followed the winding, tiny Tombigbee upriver until it disappeared in its series of creeks. We passed the ridgeline molehills and there beneath us lay the vast Tennessee River, impounded into fifty-three-mile-long Pickwick Lake. It was sparsely dotted with sailboats and houseboats and tugboats pushing barges, an enormous expanse of water wrapping around the northeastern corner of Mississippi.

"That's what we're gonna have at Columbus," said one of Wilkins's assistants as the plane flew over the long reservoir.

There are 43,000 acres of impounded water in the Pickwick Reservoir. The Columbus Reservoir, when constructed, will have 9,000 acres. I reminded him of this fact.

He said, "But that's not what I mean. It's water, isn't it?"

## Nature trails

IT IS SAID THAT among the projected benefits of a waterway which will destroy this river no one in Mississippi and Alabama cares about and no one outside of Mississippi and Alabama has ever heard of will be the large recreational areas. Twenty-five percent of the nation's impounded res-





ervoirs already exist in northeastern Mississippi, within driving distance of the counties supposed to benefit from the waterway's reservoirs. Within the past year, several of Mississippi's county-operated parks were in serious financial trouble and plans were being made to close them. The waterway's reservoirs and adjacent recreational areas will be turned over to the states of Mississippi and Alabama for upkeep two years after the projected waterway is constructed. The maintenance cost will be \$920,000 a year. This expense will be offset, it is said, by visitors to the recreational area, who are expected to number in the millions. And to accommodate the visitors—1.8 million are expected at the 9,000-acre reservoir at Columbus, Mississippi—the Corps of Engineers plans to build 1,000 picnic tables, 28 picnic shelters, 940 outdoor grills, 13 bathhouses, 11 dump stations for campers and mobile homes, 10 fishing docks, and 56 miles of nature trails.

From the canoe, I looked at the narrow slit of the river downstream ahead of us and thought of the impoundment, the barges that would be moving through here, the 1.8 million visitors along stagnant pools of water all fighting for a spot on one of the 1,000 picnic tables, and the lines of tourists that would probably wrap all the way down the length of what was once the creek of the Tombigbee River as they waited in line in the rain to get beneath one of the twenty-eight picnic shelters.

Proponents of the waterway said it would be a "recreational paradise." I wondered, as the canoe carried us along, what more they could want from this stream than it already offered. Killdeer—sandpiper-like gravel-bar birds—ignored us as we passed by. The silence of the river was broken by a woodpecker at work on a tree trunk. In the mud alongside the gravel bars were fresh imprints from deer and raccoon. A rattlesnake lay coiled on the branch of a tree. This was an intimacy which dated to that period in the Tombigbee's history when its first inhabitants lived in coexistence with the great beasts of the Pleistocene period.

As we approached a gravel bar, I remembered the voice of Bethany Claunch. She and Weldon, her husband, had chosen to hold onto their home near the evacuated town of Holcutt, Mississippi, refusing to abandon a house they had built with their hands. They had been told it would be too close to the waterway—500 yards.

Bethany Claunch kept track of time through the seasons of the year, the changes in the colors of leaves and flowers. She had covered the stubby sloping yard of her house with apple trees from orchards that had belonged to her grandfathers. But the trees and her other plants were covered with dust raised by the constant movement of heavy machinery to the site of the trench cut near their home.

"This'll look like a different place if they'll just tell us we can live here," she said of her home as we walked beneath shade trees she had planted

when they built their house, soon after her husband returned from World War II. "I'd gladly put up with the dust," she said, "if they'd just tell us we could keep our home."

The sky had turned powder gray as we walked, gray like the dust rising up behind the trucks rumbling toward the trench cut.

"We built everything we got," she said. "I don't believe I could live through it if I had to give my home up."

**W**E BEACHED THE CANOE on the wide gravel-bar island in the middle of the river and seined for fish. We took the seine to the side of the river that broke around the gravel bar and lowered it into the water. Again and again we pulled the seine through the current that shot between our legs. Tiny fish, smaller than the fingers on a grown man's hand, flashed in the net. Crystal darters and frecklebelly madtoms—clear-stream fish, specific to unpolluted waters and streams—came up in the net. They will be lost in the inundations of the Tombigbee's creeks and streams.

At this point along its course, the river was only two or three feet deep in long stretches and we frequently walked from one side to the other, trailing our hands in the clear, green water, carefully eyed by an American egret, who looked like a vain young choirboy in his white robes. It was hard to imagine barges dual-laning this stretch of undisturbed river, the great, gnarled roots of the cypress trees that reach into the edges of the water dredged out and lost.

Grace was buried up to his kneecaps and armpits and elbows again beside the gravel bar, digging for mussels with local names like "Pistol Grip," "Pig Toe," "Monkey Face," and "Butterfly."

We stood in the stream and pulled the seine out of the water. The sunlight radiated straight through a crystal darter as I held it in my palm, and I could see my palm through it, as the darter slivered for life. The strong current hit my knees and thighs and water sprayed up against my chest. The crystal darter flipped wildly about in my palm, and I wanted to squeeze the fish until it dissolved. There was no more I could do to save it than I could to save the river which had given substance and meaning to my life at almost every turn that I had taken.

I felt the darter sliver as if trying to escape between my fingers. I opened my hand and held it up, translucent in the brilliant sunlight. It was opening its dumb, diminutive mouth, dying as I held it. A crystal darter is a rare find, a rare species, a work of art soon to be lost to the waterway.

I gave the fish to Clemmer for his collecting jar. It died instantly in the formaldehyde and I said: "So long, ole buddy."



# Hidden Presidents

Looking through their memoirs for involuntary truth

by Fawn M. Brodie

*Every man has reminiscences which he would not tell to everyone but only to his friends. He has other matters in his mind which he would not reveal even to his friends, but only to himself, and that in secret. But there are other things which a man is afraid to tell even to himself, and every man has a number of such things stored away in his mind. The more decent he is the greater number of such things in his mind.*

*Dostoevsky, Notes from Underground*

**T**HOSE OF US who indulge in the illusion that we can write about American Presidents in depth ransack their autobiographies. We look for clues to character in the self-assessments, in the descriptions of their childhoods, in the conscious or unconscious doctoring of the memoirs, in their denials and defenses, and not least of all in their silences. All memory is fallible; it frequently blots out that which has been humiliating or intolerable; it reorganizes and interprets the past. Is the Presidential memoir a persona, a mask hiding that which the President most fears exposed? Is it chiefly therapy for a damaged ego or shattered reputation? Can it ever be an honest self-assessment useful to history? Is not the Presidential memoir a resource far more reliable and rewarding? Or today's Presidential tapes?

Who can even be certain, especially with modern Presidents, that any single line in an autobiography was not written by someone else? Ghostwriters for Presidential speeches go back as far as James Madison, who left his imprint on several of Washington's better paragraphs. But the ghostwritten Presidential memoir is a relatively new phenomenon, disturbing for biographer, historian, and ordinary reader. One can be certain, in looking at the fragmentary memoirs left by John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln, that all were penned without advice or revision from anyone. Who can say, however, in looking through Richard Nixon's *Six Crises* for clues to his labyrinthian conflicts that any single illuminating phrase or paragraph was not written by his secret collaborator, Al Moscow? Though the Presidential imprint is on

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all the autobiographies of our recent Presidents, one must face the melancholy truth that the nuances, metaphors, and descriptions of Presidential childhoods especially dear to the psychologically oriented biographer are all suspect.

Doris Kearns has given us a graphic picture of how Lyndon Johnson's autobiography, *The Vantage Point*, was compiled by his staff. Johnson himself, defensive and bitter, was intent on "producing" the book but still resisted the process. He felt, Kearns tells us, that to summarize his life was like constructing his own coffin. When he sat down in front of a tape machine he froze. The chapters came to life, Kearns writes, "only in the places where, against instruction, I quoted directly from the anecdotes and stories I had heard him tell informally."

But these stories Johnson cut out in horror. "God damn it. I can't say this"—pointing to a barbed comment on Wilbur Mills—"get it out right now: why, he may be Speaker of the House someday. And for Christ's sake, get that vulgar language of mine out of there. What do you think this is, the tale of an uneducated cowboy? It's a presidential memoir, damn it, and I've got to come out looking like a statesman, not some backwoods politician."

### The damaged reputation

JOHNSON'S MEMOIR, like those of James Monroe, James Buchanan, Ulysses S. Grant, Herbert Hoover, and Harry Truman, was written, in part at least, to reconstitute a damaged reputation. All Presidents have anxiety about the judgment of history, and the autobiography represents a last-ditch opportunity to make a stand against the merciless verbal assaults every President is subjected to in his years in office. Still, there are two Presidents who suffered agonizing difficulties but wrote no formal memoir at all. Andrew Johnson, the only President to suffer the humiliating anguish of an impeachment trial before the U.S. Senate, never took advantage of this obvious exercise in therapy. Instead of taking up his pen he fought to regain his old Tennessee seat in the Senate. This he won after seven years, only to die of a paralytic stroke a few months after returning to Washington. Woodrow Wilson lived almost five years after his defeat in the Senate over acceptance of American participation in his cherished creation, the League of Nations. Despite his paralytic stroke and continuing ill health, he clung to the fantasy that the party would turn to him, and he finally settled in-

to what biographers Alexander and Juliette George call a "dour and querulous" decline. Shortly before his death he said in a speech to well-wishers gathered before his house, "I have seen fools resist Providence before and I have seen their destruction, as will come upon them again—utter destruction and contempt. That we shall prevail is as sure as God reigns."

Most Presidents have had less faith in Providence, trusting themselves to provide the essential justification and rebuttal in advance of death. James Monroe began his memoir with the idea of getting rid of some pressing debts. But it remained unfinished, and unpublished, one reason perhaps being that nearly half of it is given over to a retelling of Monroe's disastrous first mission to France, from 1794 to 1796, which had brought down upon him the wrath of Washington. Monroe had felt he betrayed them, and more than thirty years later despite a reputation as a good President from 1816 to 1824, still burned to set the earlier record straight. His memoir is written in the third person, and begins, oddly though exactly, "James Monroe, late President of the United States. . . ." The reader must remind himself that the writer of the memoir was not yet dead.

Ulysses S. Grant did not immediately turn to writing his memoirs when he retired after two terms, even though the scandals in his second term had been the worst in the nation's history. It took financial disaster to make him pick up his pen. A swindler-speculator had ruined him, and he had plunged deep into debt. To earn money he began writing about his war career for *Century Magazine*, and later Mark Twain offered him a generous book contract. Grant discovered during the writing that he had cancer of the throat. To save his family from bankruptcy he wrote with the same fierce urgency with which he had moved upon Vicksburg. The story of his writing and dying—at the end he was unable to lie down, lest he strangle in his sleep, and he finished with feeble fingers only a few days before his death—demonstrates an extraordinary act of will. The book sold in enormous quantities for it was an excellently written memoir, not of his career as President, but as commander of the armies which saved the Union. It won him back much of the reputation he had lost.

Erik Erikson has written that the old doctors their memories to avoid disgust and despair, a desperate effort to maintain, or to regain, integrity. There was some doctoring in the Grant memoir, as in all, but there is no good evidence that it was deliberate, and there is every evidence that Grant was intent on regaining personal as well as political integrity.



d knew intuitively, good strategist that he as, where to concentrate his ebbing life force. Warren Harding died, most fortuitously, at as the scandals of his administration were out to engulf him. Richard Nixon, who almost died of an embolism shortly after he reigned to escape certain conviction in an impeachment trial, survived to begin the almost superable task of explanation and refurbishing. The new memoir may not be significantly different in tone from *Six Crises*, written in 1961 with the hope that it would be a springboard for an eventual second try for the White House. Every line of *Six Crises* was intended to underline Nixon's excellence. The most he can hope for from the new autobiography is to avoid being described by historians as the worst President in our history.

### Nuance, omission, self-concealment

WASHINGTON WROTE no memoir, content with the vast, though not universal, affection accorded him when he left office. Jefferson for many years refused to write a memoir of any kind. As late as 1816, when he was seventy-three, he wrote, "To become my own biographer is the last thing in the world I could undertake." Then, reversing himself, he began a memoir at seventy-seven, "for my own more ready reference," he said "and for the information of my family." But his habits of control were by then frozen into a kind of social rigidity; he could not give himself up to reminiscence. He did write vigorously about his role in the beginnings of the republic, his efforts to reform the legal code of Virginia, and his participation in the early months of the revolution in France. But after 100-odd

pages he complained, "I am already tired of talking about myself," and soon abandoned the project altogether.

Not surprisingly, he contracted his account of his two years as governor of Virginia—which had ended in what some considered a disgraceful refusal to run again for office when the British overran and desolated Virginia in 1781—into two paragraphs. This may have been one reason that John Quincy Adams, after reading Jefferson's memoir, confided morosely in his diary that though Jefferson may have been a great patriot with "an ardent passion for liberty and the rights of man," he had nevertheless "a treacherous memory" and "a double-dealing character," and was so filled with deep duplicity and insincerity that in deceiving others "he seems to have begun by deceiving himself."

Adams as a youth in Paris had written happily in his diary, "Spent the evening with Thomas Jefferson, whom I love to be with." Much had happened in the intervening years to corrode Adams's early blissful discipleship. He had come to learn what every historian must recognize, that memoirs are a tissue not of lies but of camouflage and self-deception, most of it unconscious. But was John Quincy Adams freer of self-deception than Jefferson? Can we trust any President to judge another President? They are constantly doing it. Arthur Tourtellot has compiled a whole volume of the judgments of Presidents on each other; it is a remarkable display of conflict, hero-worship, hatred, and ambivalence.

Jefferson's unfinished memoir is an exercise not so much in duplicity as in concealment, much of it conscious. His lifelong passion for secrecy about his private life had deepened with advancing years, and his true legacy lay in his letters, which he called "the only full

"Monroe's memoir begins, 'James Monroe, late President of the United States. . . . The reader must remind himself that the writer of the memoir was not yet dead.'"

*few days before the completion of his eighth year, in the absence of his father, a flock of wild turkeys*

What is most remarkable about this paragraph is the juxtaposition of the killing approached the new log cabin, and A. with a rifle gun, standing inside, shot through a crack and and the dying. Lincoln describes his killing the wild turkey, shooting through a cabin crack killed one of them. (He had never since pulled a trigger on any larger game.) In the autumn of 1818 with his father's rifle, in his father's absence. This is followed instantly by the disclaimer his mother died; and a year afterwards his father married Mrs. Sally Johnston, at Elizabethtown, Ky.—a widow, with three children of her first marriage. She proved a good and kind writes of his mother's death. Such associations are not accidental. other to A. and is still living in Coles Co., Illinois. There were no children of this second marriage.



and genuine journal" of his life. There were altogether 18,000, most of them made with duplicate copies on letter presses or his ingenious polygraph machine. He indexed almost all of them after 1783, as well as the 25,000 letters that came to him. This was a compulsively orderly man, with a sense of history as well as a sense of destiny.

But when he came to describe his own life Jefferson left some extraordinary lacunae. He failed to describe his mother at all. He left us only a single line about his wife, but this line serves to illuminate his whole marriage in a kind of incandescent flash. "I had," he said, "two months before that, lost the cherished companion of my life, in whose affections, unabated on both sides, I had lived the last ten years in unchequered happiness."

Actually, these ten years were racked with sickness, and the continual, desolating fear of Martha Jefferson's dying in childbirth. Three babies died in infancy, and there seems to have been one miscarriage. With each pregnancy she became progressively weaker, and she died after a lingering illness precipitated by the birth of the sixth child. During these same ten years the Jeffersons had to flee twice from the invasions of British troops, once from Richmond and once from Monticello. They lived with the anxiety that Jefferson would be captured and sent to London for hanging.

A memoir written by Jefferson's eldest

daughter, Martha Randolph, who was ten when her mother died, describes her father's grief: how he lapsed into a coma, how later he roamed endlessly through the woods in a mindless search for surcease from his pain. Many years later scholars deciphered a written interchange between Jefferson and his dying wife—each had copied from a passage in *Tristram Shandy* concerning death—a passage of such poignant relevance that rereading it cannot fail to wrench the heart. That Martha had singled this out for copying tells us much about her intelligence, her sensitivity, her closeness in spirit to that which touched her husband. It is only with these facts at hand that we understand Jefferson's phrase "unchequered happiness."

The need for privacy, perpetually at war with the Presidential psyche with the need for public affection, has resulted in these kinds of lacunae in all the Presidential memoirs, especially in regard to their marriages. The omissions do serve individual study and do not lend themselves to easy generalization. Sometimes the absent data can be filled in by the biographer with autobiographical fragments written at an earlier date and either forgotten or deliberately buried. Such fragments lie about in odd places in the debris of history, and finding them constitutes one of the delights of the biographer's life.

The life of Theodore Roosevelt provides a dramatic example. His 500-page memoir, written in defeat in 1912-1913, is a chatty, informal narrative, remarkably undefensive, and full of trivia. Still, his preface begins, "Naturally, there are chapters of my autobiography which cannot now be written." One assumes that he will leave out delicate matters of sexual encounters, and he does. But he also leaves out the names of all his six children, the name of his second wife, and any reference whatever to his first wife. His father and mother emerge in vivid though sentimental portraits. We must go elsewhere to learn that Theodore Roosevelt married a young girl named Alice Lee, that she died of what seems to have been kidney complications upon the birth of her daughter Alice, and that Roosevelt's mother died in the same house of typhoid fever within twenty-four hours. It is the biographers, not Roosevelt, who tell us that when he came home happily to congratulate his wife on their daughter's birth he was greeted at the door by his brother Eliot with the words "There is a curse upon this house."

Roosevelt did, however, write a two-page memoir, published privately in 1885, titled "In Memory of My Darling Wife," which he distributed to a few friends. It began, "She was born at Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts,



Washington's marriage to Martha Dandridge Custis



ly 9, 1861; I saw her on October 18, 1878, and loved her as soon as I saw her sweet fair young face." It ended with words that became famous when Richard Nixon quoted them in a farewell speech in the White House the morning of his resignation, August 9, 1974:

*She was beautiful in face and form, and lovelier still in spirit; as a flower she grew, and as a fair young flower she died. Her life had been always in the sunshine; there had never come to her a single great sorrow; and none ever knew her who did not love and revere her for her bright, sunny temper and her saintly unselfishness. Fair, pure, and joyous as a maiden; loving, tender, and happy as a young wife; when she had just become a mother, when her life seemed to be but just begun, and when the years seemed as bright before her—then, by a strange and terrible fate, death came to her.*

*And when my heart's dearest died, the light went from my life forever.*

Thus the biographer peels off the layers of documents, and the lost wife is there after all. When we begin to understand that Theodore Roosevelt's memoir was more than a geyser of trivia. He did suppress; he did repress. It is odd that after the distribution of the memorial statement he never mentioned Alice Lee Roosevelt to anyone, not even to their daughter, Anne. Why Richard Nixon chose to quote from his on his last morning as President remains mysterious, but it was one of many references to death in his last tearful moments in the White House.

## The first paragraphs

THE CHOICE OF "the moment in time" for the beginning of an autobiography can be a clue to a President's values and priorities, a window opening into what is of major significance in his life. Dwight Eisenhower began *Crusade in Europe* with a statement announcing that the Allies won the war. Harry Truman began *Mr. Citizen*, the first of several autobiographical volumes, describing the transfer of power to Eisenhower. Lyndon Johnson began *The Vantage Point* with the transfer of power to himself. Nixon began *Crises* with the failure to win power:

*"If it hadn't been for the Hiss case, you would have been elected President of the United States." This was the conclusion of one of my best friends after the election of 1960. But another good friend told me just as sincerely, "If it hadn't been for the Hiss case, you would never have been Vice Pres-*

*ident of the United States or candidate for President."*

John Adams, however, began an autobiography under circumstances that had nothing to do with power. The fragment remained for many years something of a mystery, in any case a curiosity. It is only by careful checking of what happened in Thomas Jefferson's life in September 1802 that we can understand Adams's rush to his study to write an extraordinary paragraph that was meant to be the beginning of a serious autobiography.

Adams had just learned of the scandal breaking into the press concerning Jefferson's long liaison with Sally Hemings, the attractive quadroon slave who was also half sister to Jefferson's dead wife. When Adams, now ex-President and retired on his farm in Massachusetts, read in the press accounts that Sally Hemings, whom he had met in London in 1787, had by 1802 borne Jefferson five children, he wrote privately that the liaison was "a natural and almost unavoidable consequence of that foul contagion in the human character, Negro slavery." And he deplored the publicity.

Then, in a mild panic, he picked up his quill pen and began the story of his own life. Here—written, he said, not for posterity but for his own children—he put the record straight for all history to see about the women he had not seduced.

*I was of an amorous disposition and very early from ten or eleven Years of Age, was very fond of the Society of females. . . . This I will say—they were all modest and virtuous Girls and always maintained this Character through Life. No Virgin or Matron ever had cause to blush at the sight of me, or to regret her Acquaintance with me. No Father, Brother, Son or Friend ever had cause of Grief or Resentment for an Inter-course between me and any Daughter, Sister, Mother, or any other Relation of the female Sex. My children may be assured that no illegitimate Brother or Sister exists or ever existed. These Reflections, to me consolatory beyond all expression, I am able to make with truth and sincerity.*

Adams, a great diarist, tried again and again to write a memoir, but could never bring himself to sum up his whole life. To Dr. Benjamin Rush, who continually urged him to the task, he once replied, "To rummage trunks, letter books, bits of journals, and great heaps and bundles of old papers is a dreadful bondage to old age and an extinguisher of old eyes." Later he wrote to the persistent Rush, "I have made several attempts, but it is so dull an employment that I cannot endure it. I look so

"Old sores require salving; old hatreds—like that of Jefferson for Patrick Henry in his memoir—flicker despite the best Presidential intentions to be charitable."

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Thomas Jefferson



Fawn M. Brodie  
HIDDEN  
PRESIDENTS

much like a small boy in my own eyes that with all my vanity I cannot endure the sight of the picture."

Theodor Reik long ago wrote a provocative book called *The Compulsions to Confess*. There is little of this compulsion in Presidential autobiography. There are no Rousseaus among our Presidents. But neither is there much relaxed reminiscence. Old sores require salving; old hatreds—like that of Jefferson for Patrick Henry in his memoir—flicker despite the best Presidential intentions to be charitable. Thus Harry Truman begins his memoir, *Mr. Citizen*, by describing the transfer of power to Eisenhower with an episode that reveals the incoming President to be ungracious if not churlish. It was traditional, Truman writes, for the incoming President to meet the outgoing President at the White House before the inaugural ceremony. Only John Adams, a bad loser, had failed in this courtesy by scurrying out of Washington at 4:00 A.M. on Jefferson's inauguration day. But Eisenhower not only refused an invitation to lunch with Truman, he also refused to get out of the limousine when he went to the White House to pick up Truman and drive him to the Capitol.

The two men rode up Pennsylvania Avenue in silence. Finally Eisenhower said, "I did not attend your inauguration in 1949 out of consideration for you, because if I had been present I would have drawn attention away from you." Truman writes that he replied, "You were not here in 1949 because I did not send for you. But if I *had* sent for you, you would have come." For the remainder of the journey the silence was glacial.

Later, when they were standing in the Rotunda, Eisenhower made an odd complaint, "I wonder who is responsible for my son John being ordered to Washington from Korea? I wonder who is trying to embarrass me." Truman, again nettled, and somewhat astonished—as a man who had no sons, he had thought it a generous familial gesture to bring John Eisenhower home—replied, "The President of the United States ordered your son to attend your inauguration. The President thought it was right and proper for your son to witness the swearing-in of his father to the Presidency."

Truman, writing seven years later, may not have been recording the conversation exactly (he has been caught in errors of memory), and we do not have Eisenhower's memory to balance the documentation. But Truman, in remembering and recording the episode, and the exact moment he relinquished the prodigious power of his office, noted "how swift and complete was the shift of authority and

responsibility." Then he added, "And so ended my authority over Major John Eisenhower and all other authority as well."

Washington had set a precedent by relinquishing power with exquisite courtesy. John Adams had described this in a detailed letter to his wife as well as in his diary. "The crowd cheered like men possessed," he wrote, "when Washington came into the hall. Everybody talks of tears, the full eyes, the streaming eyes, the trickling eyes." During the ceremony Washington, who was genuinely pleased with the election result and was delighted to be returning to Mount Vernon, radiated such serenity that Adams fancied him saying to himself, "Ay, I am fairly out and you are fairly in. See which of us will be happiest." And as the three Founding Fathers, Washington, Jefferson, and Adams, left the hall there was a mutually deferential little exchange over the problem of who should precede the other two. Washington, in a symbolic gesture that had important political meaning, insisted that Adams go first, then Jefferson, and then himself. So the nation passed its first test, the transference of power, not only without bloodshed or violence but also without personal humiliation.

Do we know from Washington himself how he felt on this day? Though he wrote no autobiography he did keep a diary, but it was barren of feeling, a mere jotting down of what seems to the disappointed student a compilation of trivia. Unlike Adams, who poured out his joy and his spleen in a nightly catharsis, Washington seems to have been deathly afraid of putting down what he felt. He wrote on "Much the same day as yesterday. Temperature at 41."

Perhaps the cheers and tears for Washington are a clue to why the first President never tortured himself with the necessity of self-assessment in a personal memoir. Though the skinned and bitter about attacks in his second term, he had left office with a public demonstration that he was still "first" in the hearts of his countrymen.

## Re-creating the parent

THE BIOGRAPHER should look hard and longest at what our Presidents' memoirs tell us of their parents. Freud's line, which we know describes his relationship with his own mother, has become justly celebrated: "A man who has been the indisputable favorite of his mother looks for life the feeling of conqueror, the confidence of success which often induces real success."

*It was traditional, Truman writes, for the incoming President to meet the outgoing President at the White House before the inaugural ceremony. But Eisenhower not only refused an invitation to lunch with Truman, he also refused to get out of the limousine when he went to the White House to pick up Truman and drive him to the Capitol.*

*Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower just before Eisenhower's inauguration.*



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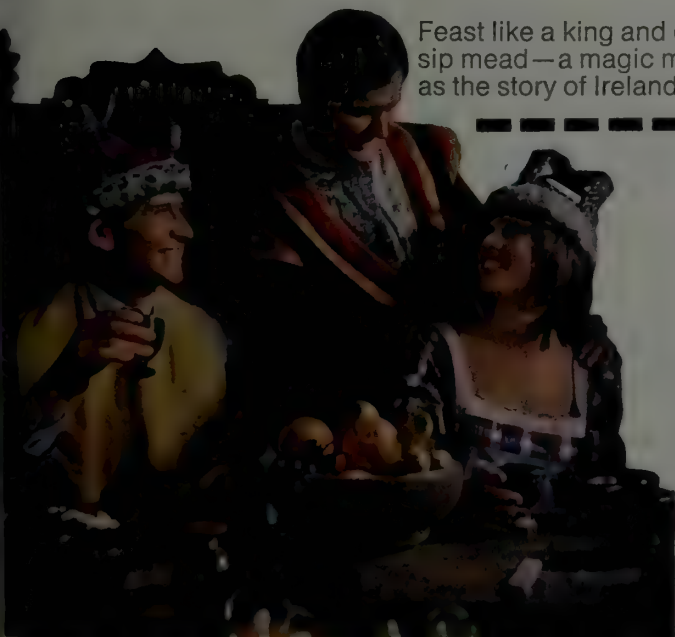


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PRESIDENTS

A surprising number of Presidents—twenty out of thirty-six—were eldest sons, which is usually the position of the favorite son. Still, being a favorite can necessitate a struggle to escape from excessive expectation, from subtle or open domination, smothering affection, or continual carping. Washington was his mother's favorite, but she was nevertheless hostile to his revolutionary activities and remained a Tory. She embarrassed the general during the Revolution by saying publicly that he was neglecting her financially, which was not true, and she attended neither of his inaugurations.

Jefferson's relations with his mother have puzzled biographers from the beginning. Of his father, who died when he was fourteen, he writes stiffly but with apparent respect, "My father's education had been quite neglected; but being of a strong mind, sound judgment, and eager about information, he read much and improved himself." The latter phrase, it will be seen, could apply equally to himself. Like most nineteenth-century writers, Jefferson began his memoir with a discussion of his genealogy: "The tradition in my father's family was that their ancestors came to this country from Wales, and from near the mountain of Snowdon, the highest in Great Britain." Beyond his immigrant grandfather Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson could trace no further backward into the paternal past. There were, however, many pretensions in the genealogical traditions of his mother's family. But Jefferson dismissed all the family folklore, and indeed all reference in his memoir to his mother, save for two sentences: "Peter Jefferson . . . intermarried in 1739 with Jane Randolph, of the age 19, daughter of Isham Randolph, one of the seven sons of that name and family, and settled at Dungeoness in Goochland. They trace their pedigree far back in England and Scotland, to which let every one ascribe the faith and merit he chooses."

The irony, the faint contempt, which is in such contrast to the respectful lines about his father, have suggested to many scholars that Jefferson's relations with his mother may well have been hostile. The additional facts that he destroyed all his correspondence with his mother, and that out of his 18,000 surviving letters he mentions her in only one—serves to strengthen the suspicion. In this lone letter, to his mother's brother in England, Jefferson did not begin with the news of his mother's death but instead discussed difficulties of the colonies with England, and then, almost by way of afterthought it would seem, wrote, "The death of my mother you have probably not heard of. This happened on the last day of

March after an illness of not more than an hour. We supposed it to have been apoplectic." The coldness and failure to express any nuance of grief are striking. Moreover, if the biographer can employ one of the techniques of the psychoanalyst—listening to the "free associations" of the President as well as looking for more direct evidence of inner conflict—one can read the remainder of this letter which has nothing to do with his mother's death, with some profit. All the associations are to quarreling, to grievance, to injury. On senses, in the nuances, not grief and loss but anger.

Obviously one cannot reconstruct a mother-son relationship on the basis of an implicit negative reference in a memoir, plus psychoanalytic speculation based on a single letter. But one must remember that Jefferson was almost obsessive about keeping all his letters, including copies of his own, which included love letters in Paris to Maria Cosway. The only collections of letters he destroyed were those of his mother and his wife, and his letters to them.

Still, it is hazardous to suggest that destruction of his mother's letters was proof of hostility and to argue on the other hand that destruction of his correspondence with his wife did not mean that theirs was not a warm and loving marriage, even though both arguments may in the end be true. The fact is that we know very little about either woman, and Jefferson was not intent on illuminating their lives for history.

Jefferson once described his youthful years to John Adams as "the dull monotony of colonial subservience," and told him that he had the choice of living his life over again he would not go back before the age of twenty-five. In another letter to a friend, he praised the sunny climate of Virginia, "our cloudless sky which has eradicated from our constitutions all disposition to hang ourselves, which we might otherwise have inherited from our English ancestors." Still, one must remember that Jefferson chose to build his enchanted house only five miles from his mother. He must once have loved her and Shadwell, where he grew up, or he would not, at twenty-one, have planted there its plane and locust trees.

LINCOLN'S LIFE was cut short by Booth's bullet, and he left no autobiography. But he had written a brief account of his life, in the third person, in 1858 as an aid to a political supporter who wanted to write a campaign biography. Here, in a single paragraph, he mentions his mother's death

*A memoir written by Jefferson's eldest daughter, Martha Randolph, who was ten when her mother died, describes her father's grief, how he lapsed into a coma, how later he rode endlessly through the woods in a mindless search for surcease from his pain.*



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crowds the most searing childhood trauma into five lines:

*A few days before the completion of his eighth year, in the absence of his father, a flock of wild turkeys approached the new log cabin, and A. with a rifle gun, standing inside, shot through a crack and killed one of them. (He had never since pulled a trigger on any larger game.) In the autumn of 1818 his mother died; and a year afterwards his father married Mrs. Sally Johnston, at Elizabeth-Town, Ky—a widow, with three children of her first marriage. She proved a good and kind mother to A. and is still living in Coles. Co. Illinois. There were no children of this second marriage.*

Here we have a mother's dying, the coming of a stepmother with three new siblings, and the faintest suggestion of relief that there were more. What is most remarkable about this paragraph is the juxtaposition of the killing and the dying. Lincoln describes his killing a wild turkey, shooting through a cabin crack with his father's rifle, in his father's absence. This is followed instantly by the disclaimer that he never killed anything bigger than a turkey. In the very next sentence Lincoln describes his mother's death. Such associations are not accidental.

Much has been written about how small children mourn the death of parents, and unconsciously blame themselves for the intolerable abandonment. Much, too, has been written about Lincoln's melancholy and fear of madness, some of it sensitive appraisal, some of it foolish exaggeration. Lincoln had seen an infant brother die, and then his mother.

When he was sixteen, one of his young friends went mad and made a maniacal attack on his parents. Later, at age thirty-five, Lincoln revisited the town and found his friend insane. Deeply shaken, he wrote a long poem about mad Matthew. If it is true, as Beauvoir said, that "poetry is a piece of very private history, which unostentatiously lets us see the secret of a man's life," one should read this poem with care. One stanza reads:

*Poor Matthew! I have ne'er forgot,  
When first, with maddened will,  
Yourself you maimed, your father fought,  
And mother strove to kill.*

It can, I believe, be demonstrated that his mother's death was related to Lincoln's lifelong tendency to melancholy. He did not give up to it, save when he broke off his first engagement to Mary Todd, but learned to control it, and found relief in the earthy stories that sprang so easily to his lips, and which were often transformed into political parables.

"Were it not for these stories I should die," he once confided, "they are vents through which my sadness, my gloom and melancholy escape."

Presidential parents, if mentioned at all in the memoirs, are usually described with affection. Jefferson's hostility to his mother is exceptional, and, as we have said, he seems to have greatly respected his father. Lincoln, however, dismisses Thomas Lincoln in his memoir with a flicker of contempt, saying that "he never did more in the way of writing than to bunglingly sign his own name." Truman enriches his autobiography with many of his mother's affectionate letters to him. In Lyndon Johnson's *Vantage Point* neither parent appears, and one must go to Doris Kearns's *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* for LBJ's firsthand descriptions of the parents who actually loomed as giants in his childhood. No Presidential parents have ever emerged in such three-dimensional quality as in Kearns's volume. Johnson said to his young Harvard historian confidante what he could not bring himself to include in his own official memoir, and one can only regret that his rambling monologues about his childhood, of necessity, had to be cut and filtered through Kearns's eyes.

Johnson's mother in the Kearns volume emerges as a beautiful, sexy, enchanting woman, whose voice nevertheless had in disapproval "a terrible knife-like" quality. His father is described as a vulgar, often drunken politician-storyteller whom his mother had come to despise. But what kind of portraits would have emerged had Johnson's confidante been an older man rather than a young woman who reminded him of his own mother in her youth? The biographer uses the material that comes his way, but ignores at his peril the circumstances of the telling.

Sometimes the parental material is so fragmentary one must resort, as with Jefferson, to the associations surrounding the references otherwise so slight. This is especially true of the memoir of Herbert Hoover, who writes little about his mother save that she was "a sweet-faced woman who after [his] father's death for two years kept the little family of four together" and who "took in sewing to add to the family resources." Except for noting his father's death, he mentions him not at all. He does, however, relate vivid memories of his father's blacksmith shop, where as a small boy he once stepped on a chip of hot iron. "I carry the brand of Iowa on my foot to this day," he wrote. He remembers, too, a cauldron of hot tar in which, when his father was absent, he once flung a lighted stick. "It produced a smoke that brought the town running and me

"If the biographer fails to take note of fragmentary material he may miss important clues to adult behavior conditioned by childhood traumas. The child lives on in the man, even when he is President."

*Johnson's mother in the Kearns volume emerges as a beautiful, sexy, enchanting woman, whose voice nevertheless had in disapproval "a terrible knife-like quality."*



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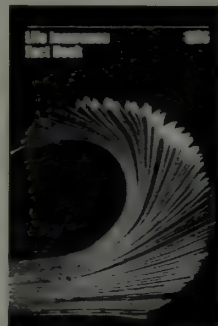
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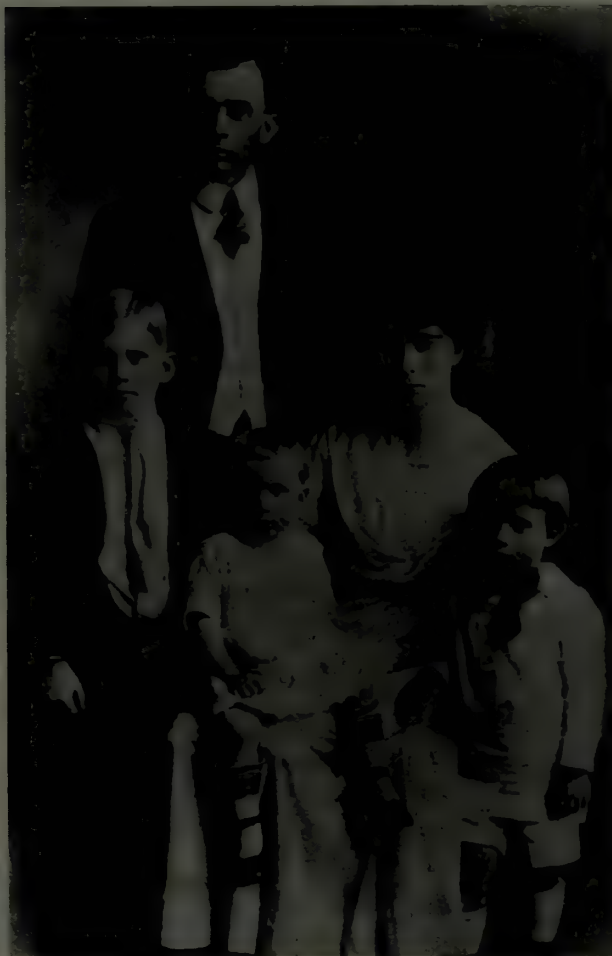


speeding the other way in complete terror. Whenever I see a picture of a volcanic eruption I recall that terror." He then relates still another memory involving danger, "an experiment in woodcarving" that "nearly cut a forefinger off." The associations to his father—branding, forbidden fires, volcanic eruptions, and cutting off fingers—seem to be out of a classic Freudian textbook. What does the biographer do with them? If he openly speculates about such fragmentary material he runs the risk of being either mistaken or absurd. But if he fails to take note he may miss important clues to adult behavior conditioned by childhood traumas. The child lives on in the man, even when he is President.

### The Presidents and assassination

SARTRE, IN DISCUSSING autobiography at age seventy, admitted that "there are still things, even for me, which refuse to be said, which I can say to myself but which resist my saying them to another. . . . There is a depth of darkness within me that does not allow itself to be said." Among such "depths of darkness" surely are the death wishes of the Vice-Presidents. Richard Nixon, in describing his own feelings at the near death of President Eisenhower, tells us in *Six Crises*

*Nixon in Six Crises did not write of his brothers' dying, though their deaths must surely have been the great crises of his youth. References to any members of his family in that volume are, as it happens, fleeting.*



*The Nixon family, 1917. Harold is on the left, and Donald is on his mother's lap.*

that he was careful in talking to the press not to smile, lest even the faintest upturn in lips be misconstrued as pleasure in the possibility of his quick succession to the Presidency. And Lyndon Johnson admitted bluntly Doris Kearns, "Every time I came into John Kennedy's presence, I felt like a goddam raven hovering over his shoulder."

But if a President dies, or is assassinated, how does his successor describe his feelings in his official memoir? Johnson begins the first chapter of *The Vantage Point*, "We're going to carry two states next year if we don't carry any others: Massachusetts and Texas." The speaker was John F. Kennedy. The time was Friday morning, November 22, 1963." A paragraph or two later Johnson writes, "They were the last words John Kennedy ever spoke to me."

The entire chapter is defensive. Johnson insists that Kennedy did not go to Texas to make peace between himself and Sen. Ralph Yarborough but to raise funds for the election. He protests—perhaps too much—that he was not responsible for Kennedy's going to Texas at all. He describes the assassination and his return to Washington, ending the chapter: "The door of the helicopter slammed shut behind me—and so ended a tragic chapter in American history." But let us note that the chapter is titled "The Beginning." The death of Kennedy is the beginning of the Johnson Presidency, the culmination of a lifetime of political hope. There is obvious guilt, obvious denial of responsibility, and also denial of hatred between the two men, for which there is abundant proof from other sources. The truth about Johnson's ambivalence over Kennedy's death, decently hidden in the chapter, emerges only in the title. However shocked and saddened he was even in retrospect, he was also, despite himself, triumphant.

Does this same ambivalence emerge in the memoir of Theodore Roosevelt, who was catapulted into the Presidency by an assassin's bullet? We know how his daughter felt at the time, since Alice Roosevelt Longworth has related with her characteristic outrageous honesty, "I did a little dance of happiness. I was never so pleased about anything. I didn't care a damn. Father wanted the White House; they must have the White House." But Theodore Roosevelt hides every hint of exultation and in his autobiography delays describing the killing of McKinley by a demented anarchist until page 339.

When Roosevelt was writing, thirteen years had elapsed. He had won the election of 1901 and had lost the election of 1912, retiring in embittered defeat to the therapy of men-



ng. Decent and conventional man that  
 evelt was, he would have denied his sat-  
 tion in winning the Presidency in this un-  
 nate manner, even to himself. Did he  
 t his daughter for her little dance of hap-  
 ss? Did he know about it? We do not  
 v. From other sources, however, we learn  
 his accession to the Presidency was at-  
 ted with remarkable serenity of spirit. On  
 ember 22, 1901, sixteen days after the  
 ting, Roosevelt sat down with his family  
 is first dinner as President in the White  
 se. His sister, Corinne Roosevelt Robin-  
 tells us that she noted that the date was  
 father's birthday.

have realized it," he said, "as I signed  
 rs all day, and I feel that it is a good  
 n that I begin my duties in this house on  
 day. I feel as if my father's hand were on  
 oulder and as if there was a special bless-  
 ver the life I should lead here."

in one deduce from this tranquil scene  
 Roosevelt felt little or no guilt for having  
 e into the White House by assassination?  
 is perilous speculation when one looks at  
 whole life. For eleven years later Roose-  
 was the victim of an assassination attempt.  
 October 14, 1912, campaigning on the  
 ressive ticket, he was leaving a Milwau-  
 hotel to go to a convention hall for a  
 sh when one John Chrank walked up to  
 and fired a bullet into his chest. Roose-  
 incomprehensibly defied the pleas of his  
 ds and insisted on proceeding to the hall.  
 e he began speaking in a low voice, "I  
 going to ask you to be very quiet and  
 e excuse me from making a long speech.  
 o the best I can, but there is a bullet in  
 ody. It is nothing. I am not hurt badly.  
 ve a message to deliver and will deliver it  
 ng as there is life in my body." Finally,  
 repeated remonstrations from his friends,  
 nished, "If one soldier who carries the  
 is stricken, another will take it from his  
 s and carry on. Tell the people not to wor-  
 out me, for if I go down another will take  
 lace. For always the army is true. Always  
 ause is there."

he bullet had entered his lung, with much  
 s velocity spent as it passed through his  
 coat, a spectacle case, and the folded manu-  
 t of his speech. But it is evident from  
 he said that he believed he might well die  
 at platform. Why then the folly? Or the  
 ism? He loved being President—saying  
 that no President enjoyed the White  
 ee as he did—and he did not want to die.  
 had he wanted McKinley to die? And had  
 e deeply repressed death wishes come  
 to haunt him, compelling the act of folly

—which might be described also as an act of  
 deepest penance?

Roosevelt in his autobiography left out al-  
 together the story of the attempt on his life.  
 Why? The mad assassin had told the world  
 that the reason he tried to kill Roosevelt was  
 that he had been bidden to do so by McKin-  
 ley's ghost. So echoes of Hamlet had found  
 their way into this tragedy. But to write about  
 all this in his autobiography—perhaps even to  
 think about it—seems to have been for Roose-  
 velt too complicating, too threatening. Not to  
 think about what was inexplicable, or burden-  
 some, or ineffably tragic was Theodore Roose-  
 velt's way of life. One has only to look at what  
 Roosevelt wrote about the death of his young-  
 est son, Quentin, in combat in World War I:

*Only those are fit to live who do not fear  
 to die; and none are fit to die who have  
 shrunk from the joy of life. Both life and  
 death are parts of the same Great Adven-  
 ture. . . . We run with the torches until we  
 fall, content if we can then pass them to  
 the hands of the other runners. The torches  
 whose flame is brightest are borne by the  
 gallant men at the front. . . . These are the  
 torch bearers; these are they who have  
 dared the Great Adventure.*

Quentin Roosevelt was one of about 9 million  
 men who died in World War I. To call death  
 in that war "the great adventure" was to deny  
 reality altogether. Thus Roosevelt protected  
 himself from pain, taking refuge in sentimen-  
 tality and cant.

**R**ICHARD NIXON also came to the Presi-  
 dency by way of assassination, though  
 indirectly. With John F. Kennedy  
 dead, and Lyndon Johnson eliminat-  
 ed, he had no major rival but Robert Kennedy.  
 Death cut him out, and Hubert Humphrey  
 could not quite succeed in blocking Nixon's  
 path to the White House. We have the old au-  
 tobiography, *Six Crises*, but as yet we have  
 nothing but fragments to tell us how the assas-  
 sinations of the two Kennedy brothers moved  
 him. When his new memoirs are published,  
 we will look with special attention at whatever  
 Nixon writes about the deaths of brothers, in-  
 cluding his own, since his younger brother, Ar-  
 thur, died at age seven, when Richard Nixon  
 was thirteen, and his eldest brother, Harold,  
 died of tuberculosis when Nixon was twenty.

Nixon mentioned the death of these brothers  
 in his farewell speech in the White House, and  
 also the deaths of four other young men his  
 mother had nursed in a tubercular clinic area  
 in Prescott, Arizona, between 1928 and 1933.

"Every time I  
 came into John  
 Kennedy's pres-  
 ence," said  
 Lyndon John-  
 son, "I felt like  
 a goddam  
 raven hovering  
 over his  
 shoulder."



But Nixon in *Six Crises* did not write of his brothers' dying, though their deaths must surely have been the great crises of his youth. References to any members of his family in that volume are, as it happens, fleeting. However, it does contain an extraordinary fantasy which still defies deciphering, but which suggests something of the Dostoevskian quality of Nixon's hidden conflicts even in 1961, when he was writing this book. In discussing tactics essential to success in defeating Communists he wrote:

*To give an extreme example. If we were to accuse [Communist] X of having killed his mother, his two brothers, and five friends, X and his allies would shout back, "That's a lie! X never hurt a hair on his old mother's head and he only wounded one brother. Foul and unfair!" The counterattack would be on, with attention diverted from the five friends and the other brother whom X had, indeed, actually killed.*

If this passage is astonishing, and still largely inexplicable, there are others no less extraordinary, but less difficult to fathom. These have to do with lying. One can see, in reading *Six Crises*, that there is a fugue quality to Nixon's life, and that the theme of lying is actually a major theme, showing early and repeated with variations.

In discussing the first crisis, the Alger Hiss case, Nixon wrote:

*From considerable experience in observing witnesses on the stand, I had learned that those who are lying or trying to cover up something generally make a common mistake—they tend to overact, to overstate their case.... I could not go against my conscience and my conscience told me that, in this case, the rather unsavory-looking Chambers was telling the truth, and the honest-looking Hiss was lying.*

After describing the confrontation between Hiss and Chambers, which convinced most of the press that Hiss had indeed been lying when he denied knowing Chambers in the past, Nixon wrote:

*There was also a sense of shock and sadness that a man like Hiss could have fallen so low. I imagined myself in his place and wondered how he would feel when his family and friends learned the true story of his involvement with Chambers and the Communist conspiracy. It is not a pleasant picture to see a whole brilliant career destroyed before your eyes. I realized that Hiss stood before us completely unmasked—our hearing had saved one life, but had ruined another.*

HARPER'S  
APRIL 1977

In this chilling fantasy of himself in Hiss's shoes did Nixon have a presentiment of his own ultimate doom? If by then he had himself lied a great deal, it would have been easy for him to imagine himself in Hiss's place. Nixon's preoccupation with lying and punishment had not begun with *Six Crises*, or the earlier confrontations with Alger Hiss, or even with his years as a Whittier, California, lawyer. There is evidence even in his high-school speeches preserved fortuitously for the biographer in his yearbooks.

The tape transcripts, edited by Nixon, and the few available unexpurgated tapes so far released provide a unique and devastating record, but Nixon never intended any of them to be made public except in fragments, skillfully edited as his own "memories" in his final autobiography. No other American President has ever prepared so meticulously for his memoir in advance of the writing. That he also inadvertently programmed his own downfall or may not be an accident of history. Many believe that unconsciously he was bent on self-destruction.

*Six Crises* is the opposite of the tape transcripts; it is the memoir of a man hiding his worst and parading the best of himself. But it tells much truth about Richard Nixon, and that independently of the fact that it is also the most self-serving of all autobiographies in Presidential literature.

Every President is often self-deceived, and the degree of self-deception varies as with ordinary men and women. The daily diaries of John and John Quincy Adams give livelier and more honest self-portraits than any organized Presidential self-assessment, but only because this father and this son were more skillful at portraiture than other Presidential diarists—George Washington, James K. Polk, and Rutherford B. Hayes—and not because the diary form by itself exacts a special rendering of truth.

All Presidents, whether writing diaries or memoirs, leave out items which might seriously affect what could be called their "verbal quotient." They also leave out what Shakespeare calls the darker shadows. If there is a common denominator in Presidential autobiography it is that which is common to most autobiography: Presidents write not to conceal the truth but to reveal the best. With the greatest of Presidents the best may be very close to the truth as historians and biographers see it, even this is not absolute truth, for with all the accumulated facts at his disposal, both biographer and historian must face the truth that no President will in the end be so much of a stranger still.



# SCROPE'S LAST THROW

Forgotten friend of Byron and Shelley bestows an unexpected legacy

by Richard Holmes

SCROPE BERDMORE DAVIES, whose remarkable trunk caused considerable excitement in London literary circles this winter, was a university don and a society gambler—a combination of *métiers* that would have interested Dostoevsky, and which only fascinated Lord Byron. His huge dragonfly career (1783-1852), in some ways typical of the wits and whimsies of the English Regency, seems to have hung on the fall of a card at the Serpentine Club, or the fall of a hoof at the market; and it ended abruptly and dramatically in his thirty-seventh year, a spectacular financial ruin leading to suicide but to a long, dismal, penurious exile in the anonymous, small seaside hotels of northern France. Byron himself observed, helpfully, that “such a man’s destiny is not to be in a dice-box.” But in the dicebox it always remained. The curious thing is that Scrope may have won on his last throw.

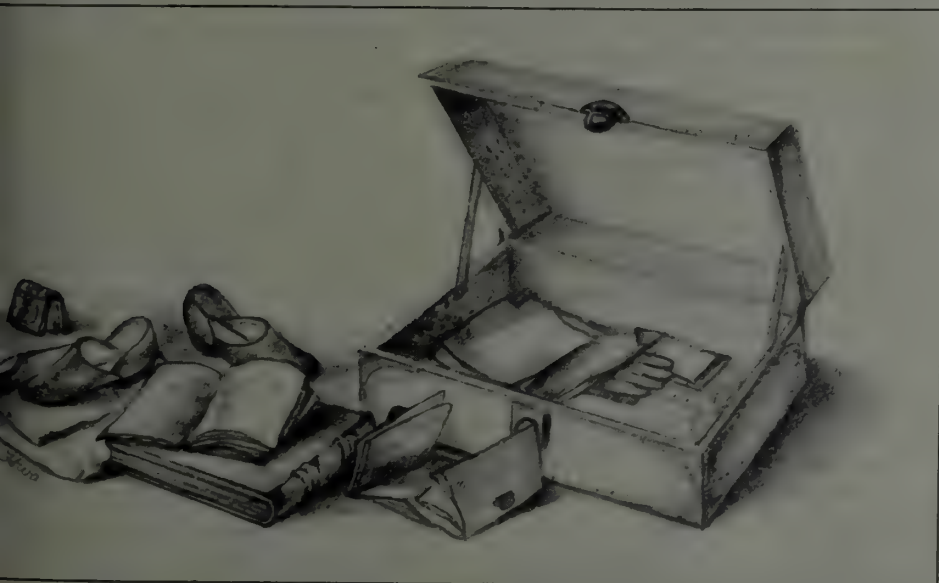
Richard Holmes is the author of *Shelley: The Pursuit*.

Up to now, astonishingly little has been known about Scrope, considering he was one of Byron’s closest friends (“one of the cleverest men I ever knew, in conversation”) and thus belongs to a period of literary history that has been more minutely excavated by scholars—English, American, Italian, and German—than any other, including Shakespeare’s. No one has written his life; no one has collected his letters; no one possesses even a picture of him. The exhaustive *Dictionary of National Biography* honors him with no entry; and the authoritative *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, edited by Leslie A. Marchand, grants him but one footnote, in which it is recorded that he was educated at Eton and had “an irresistible stammer.” Uncertain monument.

Yet Scrope was undoubtedly one of Byron’s most important confidants up to 1816. He was part of the inner circle, with John Hobhouse the politician and Kinnaid the banker, when Byron was at Cambridge; and is credited

with, among other things, the discovery that Byron slept *en papillote*, that is to say, in paper curlers (“Aha! Byron I have at last caught you acting the part of Sleeping Beauty”). It was Scrope who provided Byron with £4,000 (about \$80,000 today) to finance his first journey to Greece and Turkey in 1809, upon which Byron’s early literary successes—“Childe Harold I and II,” “The Giaour,” “The Bride of Abydos”—entirely depended. It was to Scrope that Byron turned, on the deaths of his mother and his Cambridge friend Charles Skinner Matthews, in one terrible week of August 1811; and it was to Scrope that he wrote from Calais: “Sincerely, you are among one of the few things in England that I leave with regret, and shall return to with pleasure.”

Scrope, with Hobhouse, was the only London friend invited to visit the Byron-Shelley circle in the famous summer in Switzerland of 1816; and it was to Scrope that Byron entrusted a fair copy of “Childe Harold III” to carry back to London for publication by Murray, together with secret presents of rock crystal for his beloved half sister, Augusta Leigh. It was a commission that Scrope undertook, but did not entirely discharge, as we shall see. Finally, it was in nostalgic recollection of Scrope’s incurable wit and fecklessness that Byron perpetrated one of his most delightful bad puns, which incidentally established for posterity the correct pronunciation of that bent, Dickensian name: “Tell me of Scrope—is he as full of ‘fierce embraces’ as when I last saw him? . . . I wish he would marry and beget some Scrooples; it is a pity the dynasty should not be prolonged.”



Nancy Hwa



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## SCROPE'S LAST THROW

**A**LAS, THE DYNASTY was never founded. Thirty-two years after his enforced exile in 1820, Scrope Davies died forgotten, intestate, and scroopleless, in Paris in May 1852. He was remembered only by one garrulous memoir writer of the period, a certain Capt. Rees-Howell Gronow, who recalled in an uncharacteristically gentle passage of his *Reminiscences*:

*Scrope Davies bore with perfect resignation the loss of the wealth he had once possessed; and though his annual income (provided by his faithful Cambridge college) was very limited, he made no complaint of poverty. He daily sat himself down on a bench in the garden of the Tuileries, where he received those whose acquaintance he desired, and then returned to his study, where he wrote notes upon the men of his day, which have unfortunately disappeared.*

Those precious notes have yet to be rediscovered—though I learn that the librarians at King's College are now hopefully ransacking the archives—but the forgotten trunk, never mentioned by Scrope himself, reappeared 124 years later in the private deposit vault of Barclay's Bank. To understand how this extraordinary find occurred, it is necessary to recall the circumstances of Scrope's ruin. First, consider the famous trunk itself.

It is actually rather small: a battered leather chest perhaps three feet wide and one foot deep, with a central lock and a faint smell of old riding boots. It is studded with brass rivets along the leading edges and around the joint of the lid; the studs elegantly follow the leather crescents where the corners are reinforced, and form a diamond pattern on the front. The lid opens low down, so the trunk seems to split apart like a drinks hamper or a pistol case—both pleasant associations for Scrope. Inside it is sportively lined in Regency polka-dot, and the lid is held by two silk stays. A decorative label, like an *ex libris* slip, is stuck to the back panel.

Everything that Scrope valued, and much that he did not, was hurled into the trunk during the space of one evening's hectic packing in his Cambridge rooms in January 1820. The scene was later described by a historian of King's College, W. H. Tucker:

*He had possessed himself, as ad-*

*mitted and known in College, by slow—or other—degrees of some £20,000 at Newmarket; and as was most natural in betting men to double it, or more: in modern phrase, he rather plunged. On a certain evening he came into his rooms rather hurriedly, and with Mrs. Hazel's help began to pack up his personal effects. "What is it, Sir?" she enquired. "Ruin! I've lost all I had, and as much more; and must leave tonight. Tomorrow will be too late."*

Scrope fled by the overnight coach to London, deposited the trunk at bankers, Morland, Ransom & Co. No. 1 Pall-Mall East (where Byron banked, and Kinnaird was senior partner), and departed into obscurity. Some accounts say Calais, some Ostend, some say Bruges. Thereafter he never dared to return to England for fear of arrest, bankruptcy, public disgrace, and inevitable imprisonment. In the end, he may have forgotten about the contents of the trunk, or more tantalizing possibility, he simply could never risk reclaiming it. At Byron's death at Missolonghi in 1826 and the scandalous success of Thomas Moore's *Life and Letters* (1830), the temptation to reclaim it would have been agonizing. But the trunk was out of reach—though not out of play.

Time passed, as it does in England. Morland, Ransom & Co. merged with several other private banks to form Barclay's. The building became Kinnaird House. But for 100 years, the private deposit vault was undisturbed. In 1922 the trunk was restacked, relabeled, a little vaguely, S. Davies but still it was not opened. Only in November 1976 did a literary-minister director of Barclay's, Christopher Man-Butler, finally alight once upon the chest and guess at its potentialities. The present John Murray Albemarle Street, the direct descendant of Byron's original publisher, Daniel Waley of the Department of Western Manuscripts of the British Library, were immediately called in; two distant kinsmen of Scrope's approached in confidence. These Martin R. Davies, a solicitor from London, and Bevis Hillier, an art collector and critic, who happens also to be a regular contributor to the *London Times*. At a dinner party of British scholars at the Athenaeum Club on December 14, heady rumors buzzed about the smoked trout and white Burgundy.



Mr. Murray had a peculiar glint in his eye. But it was not until December 20 that the story finally broke in old-fashioned, front-page literary copy in the London *Times*, brilliantly edited by Hillier, and copied next morning by the *New York Times*. Leading articles appeared throughout the English-speaking press, the television filmed Mr. Norman-Butler handing the trunk (now empty) to Lord Es of the British Library, and Lord Es handing the trunk back (still empty) to Mr. Norman-Butler for another go, and the BBC World Service took up the discovery as its premier item. Scrope was news!

**W**HAT DID THE TRUNK contain? Martin Davies well described its chaotic interior, so redolent of Scrope's last hectic hours in England, as "a sort of miniature Pompeii of the late Regency period." The first impression was of scores and scores of unpaid bills and betting slips pinned to wire desk spikes; then an immaculate pair of white kid evening gloves; several embossed invitations from Lady Es and the Duke of Wellington; letters and drawings from Scrope's younger brother, Decimus, who guarded Napoleon on his last journey to St. Helena (another exile); and a packet of love letters from Lady Frances, a noted society beauty of the early Regency, an early flame of Byron's, and a mistress of the Iron Duke's. In the letter, a perfectly preserved and precious lock of her hair.

Then there were the dandy's tailor's bills—a pair of red lounging slippers, a pair of white tennis shoes, twelve shirts' worth of shirts from C.H. Heas, half-a-dozen Indian muslin handkerchiefs; traders' advertisements for expensive wine and cheap brandy; a bottle of cognac at 9 shillings a gallon; small account slips from the White Star Club for dining and gambling; collections of after-dinner jokes and riddles, both in English and Latin, all carefully prepared, like Oscar Wilde's, for "spontaneous" repartee at the seltzer. More letters, in a jumble from Thomas Moore, from Hobbes, from Augusta Leigh. Then the legal documents, like a gathering tide, leaving Scrope fighting at the Court of Common Pleas in 1818 for sums

over £7,000; and the sinister shoal of tiny personal betting books, annotated with a minuteness that is already obessional.

Finally, buried beneath this jackdaw heap, the sensational prizes: first, twenty unknown letters from Byron to Scrope written through the decade 1809-1819, the seals torn open and the flakes of red wax still lying in the fresh folds. Second, a scarlet morocco-bound notebook, containing Byron's lost fair copy of "Childe Harold III," which Scrope had evidently kept for himself instead of delivering to Murray in 1816, and marked with Scrope's proud annotation: "This Ms was given by Lord Byron to Scrope Davies at Geneva, September 2nd, 1816." (Fortunately, Shelley did deliver the fair copy Byron had given him that same summer.) Third—and perhaps most surprising of all—a pair of matching notebooks, bound in almost identical blue-and-orange marbled board, emanating from the Shelley circle. One contains a fair copy of Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon," beautifully written out in round, childish hand by Claire Clairmont—Mary Shelley's stepsister, and Byron's mistress of that summer, aged eighteen and desperately in love, and so anxious to prove her worth. The other contains fair copies of four Shelley poems of the Swiss period: two unknown sonnets (one fragmented, the other entitled "To Laughter"), the famous "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," and the philosophical poem "Mont Blanc," with Shelley's annotation, "Scene—Pont Pellisier in the Vale of Joux."

This fantastic hoard has stunned scholars and antiquarians, and full assessment will obviously take most of this year. What are the manuscripts worth (a single copy of Byron's "Bepo" was sold at Sotheby's for £55,000—about \$94,000—in 1976)? Where should they be kept? What new light do they throw on the Byron-Shelley circle in 1816? What do they tell us about the Regency dandies? The answers to such immediate questions will only be pieced together slowly. It is not even clear yet to whom the trunk actually belongs, but for the time being it has been put on loan to the British Library.

Some perspectives, and also some puzzles, are emerging. The copyright of the twenty new Byron letters lies in the control and keeping of John



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## SCROPE'S LAST THROW

array, but extensive extracts are being published by the London Byron Society *Journal* this spring, when some judgment of their value will be possible. It is already evident that Scrope's place in Byron's emotional development, his role of model dandy and confidential rake, will be assured by them. Those letters written from Italy also contain strikingly bitter revelations of Byron's attitude to English society and his own exile. Meditating in Venice on the rumors concerning his estranged father and his half sister that had originally driven him abroad, Byron remarks cuttingly, "If they were *true* I am unfit for England, if *false* England is unfit for me." He confides to Scrope in a mood of weary sarcasm:

*You recollect that with the exception of a few friends (yourself among the foremost of those who staid by me) I was detested and blackened by all . . . nothing can ever atone to me for the atrocious caprice—the unsupported—almost unasserted—the kind of hinted persecution—and shrugging Conspiracy—of which I was attempted to be made the victim—if the tables were to be turned—if they were to decree me all the columns of the Morning Post—and all the tavern-signs of Wellington—I would not accept them.*

The full text of such letters as these, when they finally appear, will obviously be a fascinating, if melancholy, picture of Byron's home thoughts from abroad, and explain something of the mood in which he transformed himself to Don Juan, the greatest of all poetic dandies, the dandy adrift, the dandy who's gone to the devil.

The "Childe Harold" notebook, for its value, perhaps tells us more about Scrope's character than Byron's poetry. Rome McGann, of Johns Hopkins University, who is preparing an exhaustive new edition of the poetry for Oxford University Press, flew to London to examine the manuscript as it was being catalogued. He told me, as we stood among the debris of the trunk, drinking tea and reading Scrope's wine lists, that his first impression was that the new readings of the poem would amount to little more than variorum footnotes, with minor alterations of adjectives and punctuation. The notebooks contain Byron's amusing political footnotes, which were later suppressed. Scholars are however naturally cau-

tious, and McGann's final assessment will appear when his great opus, begun in 1970, finally surfaces.

Caution is justified. When the "Mont Blanc" notebook was initially put on public display in mid-January, it was naturally assumed that all the poems were in Shelley's own hand. But another pouncing American scholar, Judith Chernaik, quickly spotted that this was not so. Timothy Burnet of the Manuscript Department swiftly brought out a pile of contemporary holographs by Shelley, Mary Shelley, and Claire Clairmont, and a somewhat bizarre but very English kind of conference was instantly convened over the glass display cases as the library was closing for the night, amidst a small posse of anxious, peak-capped attendants, indulgently checking their watches and the priceless manuscripts in benign alternation. The revised opinion now stands that the first three poems are in Mary's hand, and the fourth, "Mont Blanc," in Shelley's.

This notebook remains the most puzzling of all. How on earth did Shelley's poems come to be in Scrope's trunk at all? Scrope and Shelley were not friends; nor would Byron have dreamed

of sending Shelley's notebook back to Murray with Scrope. Did Scrope somehow purloin it, and keep it like the "Childe Harold" and "Chillon" notebooks? Or was there some genuine muddle-up with Claire's copy, which looks so like it (both notebooks, incidentally, carry English watermarks for 1813)? It is intriguing.

One interesting possibility is that Mary copied out Shelley's Swiss poems at Byron's own request, as their summer together drew to a close, so that the notebook might form a kind of literary souvenir; and that Byron subsequently allowed it to fall into Scrope's clutches. This speculation serves to draw attention to the best of the two new sonnets, "To Laughter." Its subject—an attack on the cynical worldly humor, the sort that "mocks at truth and Innocency," frequently indulged in by Byron's friends—may have been of special interest, or relevance, to Scrope. Indeed, it may conceivably have been about him.

Scrope and Hobhouse arrived at Byron's lakeside residence, the Villa Diotadi, on August 26, 1816, and their stay overlapped with Shelley's by three days. We know from Mary's *Journal*

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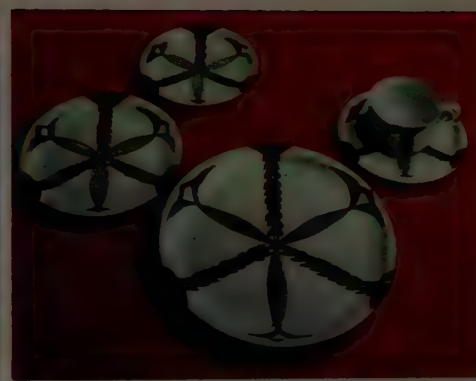


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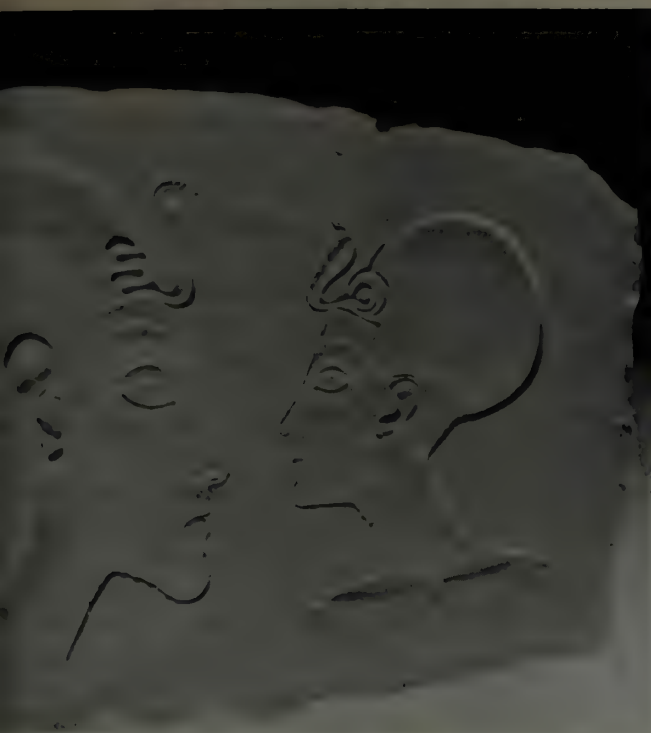


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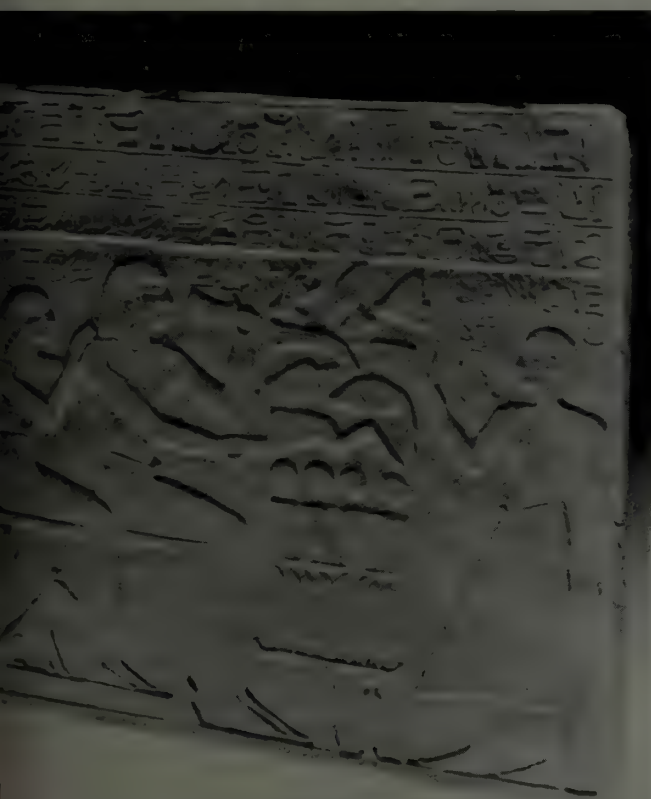




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that Shelley spent at least two evenings in their company. The temperamental differences between Shelley and Scrope would have been very great—the earnest atheist meeting the roué—and it is not difficult to imagine Shelley's sonnet as an "occasional" piece dashed off after such an encounter. It certainly has the sense of a violent personal attack. Here it is, transcribed from the manuscript:

*To Laughter*

*Thy friends were never mine thou  
heartless fiend:  
Silence and solitude & calm &  
storm,  
Hope, before whose veiled shrine  
all spirits bend  
In worship, & the rainbow vested  
form  
Of conscience, that within thy  
hollow heart  
Can find no throne—the love of  
such great powers  
Which has requited mine in many  
hours  
Of loneliness, thou ne'er hast felt;  
depart!  
Thou canst not bear the moon's  
great eye, thou fearest  
A fair child clothed in smiles—  
aught that is high  
Or good or beautiful.—Thy voice  
is dearest  
To those who mock at truth &  
Innocency  
I, now alone, weep without shame  
to see  
How many broken hearts lie bare  
to thee.*

The most soaring line in this rather tortuous poem, "Thou canst not bear the moon's great eye," lends the whole piece the silvery atmosphere of a nocturnal soliloquy, and one recalls Shelley's meditative midnight walks down the little track through the vine fields that linked Byron's villa with his own cottage of Montalegre. Shelley's high-minded defense of "aught that is high or good or beautiful" is typical of his immature Platonism, and would have tickled Scrope. It is also possible to see a reference to Claire in the "fair child clothed with smiles": for Claire, though pregnant, was already in the role of Byron's cast-off mistress and may well have been the butt of some sly remarks at the Diodati ("How many broken hearts lie bare to thee").

Shelley's general complaint in the sonnet is that none of the "great powers" which he himself worships—Si-

lence, Solitude, Hope, and Conscience—find a place in Laughter's "hollow heart." It is an interesting coincidence that this sentiment finds an exact echo in Byron's own, slightly ambivalent, response to Scrope's indefatigable wit. When Scrope came to visit him at Newstead Abbey, after the death of their mutual friend Matthews in 1811, Byron wrote:

*Davies has been here, and has invited me to Cambridge for a week in October, so that, peradventure, we may encounter glass to glass. His gaiety (death cannot mar it) has done me service; but, after all, ours was a hollow laughter. You will write to me? I am solitary.*

Did Byron perhaps confide something of the same feeling to Shelley in 1816 at the Diodati? And was the sonnet the result? It is certainly a possibility.

Yet this is all speculation. How and why Scrope got his hands on the little notebook, whether Byron was malicious or merely muddled in letting him see it, and how the angry sonnet "To Laughter" came to disappear without trace in Shelley's (or Mary's) other papers must all remain mysteries. Some fuller explanation may be forthcoming when Mrs. Chernaik and Mr. Burnet publish their complete transcription of the notebook in the *Times Literary Supplement* this spring.

FOR SCHOLARS, as indeed for bankers and antiquarians, the cardinal interest of the trunk must lie in the minute evaluation of the Byron and Shelley prizes therein. But for a biographer, a rather different kind of enchantment flits and winks through the sad ruins of that paper Pompeii. All mysteries, all clues, all speculations seem to lead inexorably back to the elusive character and career of Scrope himself. Beside the "Mont Blanc" notebook, now enshrined in its glass case, lies a tiny, ragged-edged betting book, much thumbed and covered in columns of jottings. Bend closer; the ink is a little faded, the writing a little... tipsy. "Won at shooting—5 shillings. Lost at billiards—10 shillings. Lost at fishing—5 shillings. Won at Throwing Stones—18 shillings. Lost at chicken driving—£1." It is not much of a poem perhaps, but it is still a vivid revelation of poor Scrope's obsessions and contradictions.

In his own way, Scrope was much of a Romantic extremist, much a representative of the "spirit of the age," as his more illustrious companions. When we discover that Byron calculated that his friend was worth £50,000 in 1816 (say, a round million dollars in contemporary currency) the suddenness and stunning size of his ruin within four years takes on something like magnificent something that Gatsby might have found "truly grand."

Moreover, his wit—by all accounts a fine, high-strung mixture of academic pedantry, gaming slang, religious and smoking-room farce—was obviously memorable (if only as Shelley remembered it) and renowned throughout London and Cambridge, while his sense of social deportment and rigid code of honor (which extended to dueling, if not to manuscripts) had a finer tone than the mannered punctiliousness of the average St. James dandy. His exile, like Beau Brummell's, was a last gesture of good taste. In touching, in the circumstances, that Byron chose to praise him in the following terms: "Whatever Davies says I will swear to—and that's more than he would."

Morally, Scrope was flawed, to almost tragic degree, and it is this darker dimension that the minutiae of his trunk seem to establish for the first time. His gambling, like his drinking, has a kind of remorseless self-destructiveness that one can see piling up, by bet, bill by bill, debt by debt, in the account books. Yet he remained curiously lucid about his own self-curiously self-mocking and detached so that when the end came he could accept it with a good grace, almost spirituality, that Gronow seems to find at years later in the Tuileries garden.

Two anecdotes—one from Byron, one from Gronow—sum up this quality, this scroopishness, shall we say, better than all others. The first is from 1814, when Byron and he dined one night together at the Cocoa-Tree. Byron recounts:

*Sat from six till midnight—drank between us one bottle of champagne and six of claret, neither of which wines ever affect me. Offered to take Scrope home in my carriage but he was tipsy and pious, and was obliged to leave him on his knees praying to I know not what purpose or pagod.*



is an expressive picture: Scrope lies, drunk but still elegant, kneeling at a clubland dining table, silently saying his prayers as the servants carried by the bottles, snuffed the candles, counted the small change.

The second anecdote has no date, belongs perhaps to Scrope's last years in England, for it has a sense of imminent departure about it. In a single night of cards, Scrope had succeeded in entirely dispossessing a young democrat of everything he owned. As it filtered through the curtains, the poor youth sank down upon a sofa, in abject misery, when he reflected that he was a beggar; for he was on the point of marriage. Scrope Davies, touched by his despair, entered into conversation with him, and ended by giving him back the whole of his losses, upon a solemn promise that he never would play again. The only thing that Scrope retained of his winnings was one of the little carriages of that day, called a dormeuse, from its being fitted up with a bed; for he said, "When I travel in it I shall keep the better for having acted lightly."

story is exquisitely scroopish in its mix of kindness and cynicism, the don of the gambler ironically reconciled; yet it is also shadowed by the same ironic quality, the sense of the inevitable, lonely, ruined exile awaiting him after the long years of shiftless beds in ill, squalid, foreign hotels, alone with his debts and his memories.

Now finally he has returned with a trunk: his last dormeuse, his "dice-box," his dustbin, his monument. And he seems, in the end, to have won: his life is the talk of clubs and common rooms once more, and his name has come home from obscurity. A long-awaited biography by Hillier and Dawkins will no doubt be with us soon; letters will take their place in Prosper Marchand's great edition in a flurry of appendices; and his position in the Romantic saga will be red. Moreover, there is one other circumstance that would have pleased him. The entire contents of his trunk probably prove to be worth between one and two million dollars: so, in the end, he doubled his stakes and stayed at the board. The takings are on at the British Library, Bloomsbury, until the end of April.

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# PATHS TO REDEMPTION

by Andre Dubus

*Lancelot*, by Walker Percy. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$8.95.

THERE ARE WHAT appear to be repetitions here: some lines, even passages, are paraphrases from Percy's earlier novels. And the metaphor of the hurricane which worked so well in *The Last Gentleman* (people are happier, and better to each other, during a hurricane) is expanded in *Lancelot*: the climactic action of the novel occurs during a hurricane.

I believe there are good reasons for this, and that finally what we are seeing is not repetition at all. Walker Percy was forty-five years old when he published his first novel, *The Moviegoer*. So what we don't see in Percy's novels is the changing vision of the world that we often get from a writer who publishes while he is young, and then continues to write. With *The Moviegoer* we were in the hands of a mature writer whose theme had already chosen him. He has been possessed by it ever since, and that is why he is not truly repetitious. A repetitious writer is

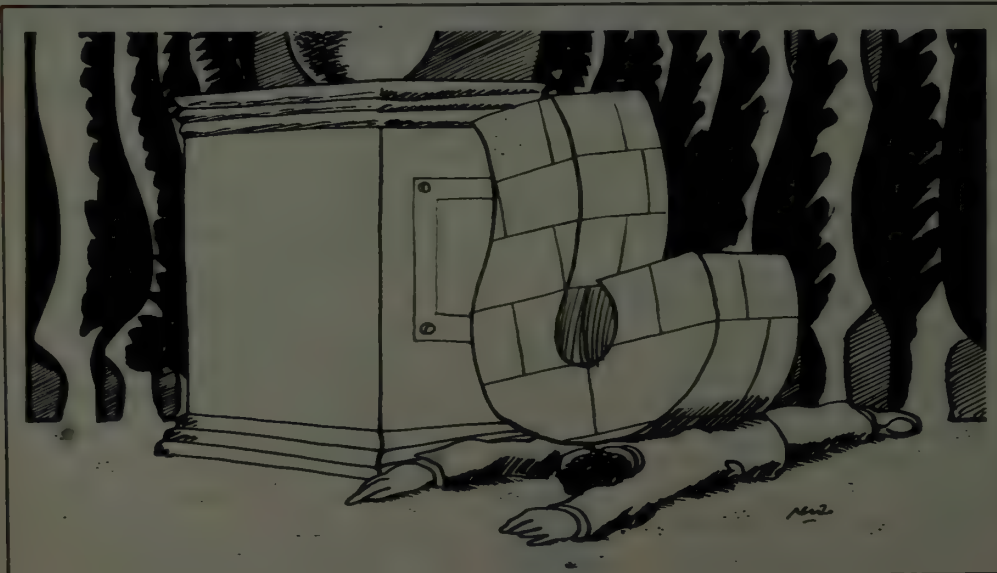
a tired writer, perhaps filling the blank page because there is nothing else to do. Percy is not tired; he is growing stronger; so that when parts of *Lancelot* sound like parts of the earlier novels, it's not repetition we're hearing, but the resonant sound of a writer grappling with his theme. He could not have known, when he discovered the hurricane metaphor in *The Last Gentleman*, that years later *Lancelot* would demand it again. And for Percy to find different metaphors, different words, would be little more than vanity, a surface concern subordinate to his real struggle with the question that will not leave him alone.

The question is simple and profound: What is one supposed to do on an ordinary afternoon? Therefore, what is time for? What is a human being for? To ask the questions and find no answers causes despair (Sutter Vaught in *The Last Gentleman*). Not to ask the questions causes a despair that doesn't know it is despair; this is what troubles most of the secondary characters in Percy's novels, which is why they feel better during hurricanes

(from *Lancelot*: "Hurricanes, which are very bad things, somehow neutralize the other bad thing which has no name"). Percy's heroes are assaulted by both: they ask the questions and find no absolute answers, they are surrounded by friends and relatives who don't ask the questions who are dead while they yet breathe, talk, make plans, carry them out. From *The Moviegoer*: "I don't feel any gloomy!" she cries. "Now that M and Lance have grown up and fled the coop, I am having the time of my life. I'm taking philosophy courses in the morning and working nights at the Petit Théâtre. Eddie and I have examined our values and found them pretty darn enduring..." Very good. And then I can't help wondering myself: why does she talk as if she were dead?"

*Love will disappear from the face of the public world, but the more precious will be that love which flows from one lonely person to another. The world to come will be filled with animosity and danger, but it will be a world open and clean.* That's a portion of one of the epigraphs of *The Last Gentleman*, a quotation from Ronald Guardini's *The End of the Modern World*. It could serve as an epigraph for Percy's four novels. In each of them the hero is searching; he is searching because he has to, because if he does not search he will join the active dead who move about the joyless landscape, making so much money, making children. The search remains the same from novel to novel, as it must—for how can Percy ever find the answer? And can he quit without the answer?

Percy Pastor



Andre Dubus teaches English at Boston College and is the author of a forthcoming short-story collection, *Adultery*.



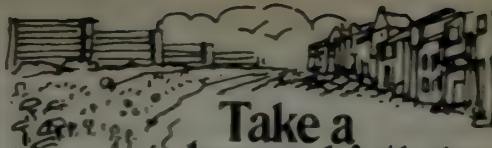
WITH EACH NOVEL the tone changes. Binx Bolling of *The Moviegoer* is often comic; his struggle, but the way he tells us about it. Should he buy a service station (or become a doctor?) The end of *The Moviegoer*, though, is by turns grim and comic. People are dead, dead, dead; and the world has settled like a fall-out and people really fear is not that the bomb will fall but that the bomb will not fall. Heartbreaking (the death of a young boy), and affirmative in a strange way (Binx discovers what he can do on an ordinary day: he can do nothing to neurotic Kate, and keep himself from going under). But for the rest *The Moviegoer* keeps a comic tone because young Binx is one of the people whose values the world does not accept. So is Bill Barrett of *The Last Gentleman*: he knows there is something wrong in the land, yet he does not try to understand and tolerate the people who embody that something. In the end he joins them while repudiating their values: he becomes the personal manager of his father-in-law's real estate agency. What will save him is to be saved—is his marriage to Kitty and his belief that his wife's death will enable him to transcend the inevitable middle-class circumstances in which he must live. It is a choice that many people choose, but it is a dangerous one; John Cheever has written much about what happens after that choice, and in his work the circumstances of the characters' lives usually destroy that early sweet and hopeful love. *The Last Gentleman* is comic, too, because Barrett maintains a tolerant vigilance of the world around him, though at one point in the novel he resorts—happily and justifiably—to violence: he is the right man at the right time. A moment of certainty in violence occurs, in *Lancelot*, the climactic act of the novel.) In *Love in the Ruins* the things are closing in on Percy's life: he is literally under attack. More is older and less tolerant than Binx and Barrett; his wife has died and he likes the bottle. Both the struggle and the struggle are more subtle, more tangible: hippies, rapacious blacks, sex clinics have added the nuances of despair that are like ghosts the nice conversation with nice people in the first two

novels. *Love in the Ruins* also ends in marriage.

A tenuous solution, some might say. It could even be argued that the condition of marriage in the land has caused some of the symptoms which Percy confronts. Wired human bodies fornicating in a laboratory. Stoned promiscuity of the young, adultery of the older, and what Percy sees as abstraction from oneself, a feeling of being outside of oneself; finally an inability to feel. Of course it would be interesting if Percy wrote a novel about two of his survivors, married, trying to change routine to ritual, and ritual to sacrament. I believe it's unfair to ask it of him. Percy heads into the storm that hits him, and he ends in the harbor he finds. For the coastal residents to tell him that life is bad there is irrelevant. What's important is the honesty and courage of his weathering and survival.

In *Lancelot*, Percy is again confronting the forces which make it so difficult for us to make moral choices and live by them. And his hero, Lancelot Lamar, is angry. Because of this, the novel goes further, more deeply, than the three before it. Lancelot cannot be content with amused tolerance of others, while he takes his lady to bed. In a land where so many are devoting their energy to coping, to being like everyone else and surviving it, Lancelot cries out no. It is a different kind of no. It is not the no of dope or booze or television or what we call recreation. It is the no of Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*, who finally tells Creon that she simply refuses to live in the world as it is; and that no causes her death. Lancelot's no causes death too, and a new world. It is a small world: the world of the soul, of moral choice and action, is always limited to the few who choose it.

I am avoiding giving details of the novel's action because this is the only Percy novel in which suspense is an essential part of the reader's pleasure. The suspense is created by Lancelot; he cannot, like the earlier Percy heroes, find a peaceful bemused niche within the world he sees: he must act, and his action is the center of the novel. He struggles against loss of personal worth and values, a history that haunts him, the infidelity of his wife, his own lust and its purpose, the loss of two of his children to the nonvalues of the age, the invasion of his empty



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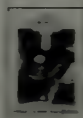
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life by even emptier Hollywood directors and actors (for a while their emptiness is active enough to make his emptiness even more passive), with women whose liberation, he believes, has further enslaved them to their unique condition of being the only female creatures who are always in heat, and with God.

In all of Percy's novels Catholicism is essential as an alternative. In this one Lancelot recognizes (as Sutter Vaught did in *The Last Gentleman*) the failure of the church: what Percy calls world-weary Catholic tolerance, which no longer makes a stand, for it has befriended the wrong people, become too much like them. Lancelot says to Percival, his boyhood friend, now a priest: "I won't have it your way with your God-bless-everything-be-

cause-it's-good-only-don't-but-if-you-do-it's-not-so-bad." And later he says: "So you plan to take a little church in Alabama, Father, preach the gospel, turn bread into flesh, forgive the sins of Buick dealers, administer communion to suburban housewives?" If Catholicism demanded a stoic life in the desert, no doubt Lancelot would happily do it. But, looking at the flabbiness of the modern church, Lancelot decides there is only one way to leave the present world and enter the new one which all Percy's heroes have yearned for. Lancelot, through his own will and action, destroys the present world, and after that cleansing destruction, he starts over. This novel is Percy's strongest counterattack against those forces which I suspect are still shrieking at his door. ■

passion for the ordinary—"the ch the deep rivers, the unchanging fundity of nostalgia"—that they wacky, wrong for this world, was for an accident.

From previous experience Cheever, then, one expects that Ezekiel, luck, or charm, will run out. Good chance—in Cheever country, chance is a sort of secular substitute for—will unmoor him. He will center himself, like a compass: surely in this mess of memories and dreams there is a moral pole toward which the knowing needle swings and points. Something will be required of him: extravagance, a surprise, a rhapsody, a proof.

But hold on. Ezekiel is also a heroin addict. Ezekiel murders his own father with a fire iron. Ezekiel is in prison, gets beaten up, has a homosexual love affair, and busts out. We are, in the Falconer Correctional Facility, a long way from Shady St. Botolphs, and Bullet Park. It is, if our Chekhov—and some of us believe Cheever to be our Chekhov—ducked into a telephone booth and reappeared wearing the cape and tard of Dostoevsky's Underground Man. Modernism, the literature of alarms, has caught up with him.

It's not that violence and death have been missing from Cheever in the Men down, and crack up cars fall off mountains in his stories; children eat ant poison. Fifteen-year prodigies commit suicide. A wife kills her husband as he is about to get on the living-room couch. Someone is devoured by his own dogs. People die to death when cans of charcoal explode at barbecue parties.

But always in the past these seemed to be accidents, arrangements as to throw into relief the fragility of all that Cheever holds most dear: sanctuaries of love, "the perfume of life: sea water, the smoke of blue hemlock, and the breasts of women." "The ear's innermost chamber, we hear the heavy noise of the dead tail moving over the dead leaves." It seemed to be reminding us of how foolish we were in our tacit claim that there had been no past, no war, there was no danger or trouble in the world.

He did his reminding in a precisely once evocative and dreamy. (I still need saying that the English

## CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

by John Leonard

*Falconer*, by John Cheever. Alfred A. Knopf, \$7.95.

A JOHN CHEEVER character has wandered into the wrong novel and doesn't know how to get out. Where am I? Here, Céline's hospital; there, Kafka's penal colony; yonder, some William Burroughs; back away, the Bible, with God in a bad mood and the sun-crazed desert prophets explaining why. Whatever happened to suburbia?

Certainly Ezekiel Farragut is a Cheever character—an upper-middle-class Wasp with marital problems, a professor of discrepancies, a disappointed romantic. Indeed, his disappointments amount almost to ecstasies. He thinks like this:

*What he felt, what he saw, was the utter poverty of erotic reasonableness. That was how he missed the target and the target was the mysteriousness of the bonded spirit and the flesh. He knew it well. Fitness and beauty had a rim. Fitness and beauty had a dimension, had a floor, even as the oceans have a floor, and he had committed a tres-*

*pass. It was not unforgivable—a venial trespass—but he was reproached by the majesty of the realm.*

Trespass, borders, contours, "that sense of sanctuary that is the essence of love" have always been important to Cheever characters. The mundane itself is a principality, with a rueful lyric for its anthem. The sadness in rumpus rooms is somehow political, a condition of citizenship in Cheeverdom. Typically, Ezekiel's feelings are chaotic, "and he might have cried, but he might have cried at the death of a cat, a broken shoelace, a wild pitch." He is decency at an impasse.

What does Ezekiel want? Not much: "A little kindness." "Some oneness . . . some contentment." "He would settle for the stamina of love, a presence he felt like the beginnings of some stair." Perhaps he doesn't want enough; Cheever people are often punished for not having wanted more boldly. Still: "Almost everyone I love has called me crazy." And that's typical, too. Cheever people care with such

John Leonard is the chief cultural correspondent of the New York Times.



is lucky John Cheever writes in "The accidents could be thought of as dreams, to which the dreamer added as if 'to a memory that I had experienced.'" All accidents, all events in Cheever country—of infidelity, revenge, escape, rum punch, scarlet gowns, full-page spreads in national magazines, fathers, castles, hydrogen bombs, supermarkets—seemed to have equal weight and a similar texture. They were preparations for the absorption of mind and spirit. Even in *Bullet Park*, when Hammer called Nailles to sacrifice his own son, it is possible to believe that Hammer has manufactured darkness, a standard-malign chance, a bad dream by which Nailles might find a way to his love for Tony.

Even inside the walls of *Falconer*, violence and death are real, and to accommodate them the prose occasionally coarsens. Ezekiel dwells on jewel thieves, check-forgers, hit-men, kidnappers, wife-killers, huge cigarettes stubbed down to the ashtray of their being. As they lie down and explain themselves, as they lie in their sleep, as they listen to reports on what appears to be an Attica uprising, as they stand at the window to masturbate in a long tunnel in the Valley, they don't sound like they're Wapshot. They are experiencing extremity, not dreaming it; their wounds are permanent. A prisoner's eardrums have been pierced with a pick isn't going to hear any more of dragons' tails. The massacre in the cellblock cats isn't lyrical; it is a turning.

OUTSIDE THE WALLS, the sweet prose is still at work. Cheever hasn't forgotten how. There are flashbacks—flares, really, emanations—by whose bright brief we see something of Ezekiel's shape. There is his family, "his origins": his father wanted him to be a doctor; his brother, Eben, liked to tell him of this fact; I think I have hit Eben with a fire iron. There are snapshots of his life ("You are the biggest misadventure ever made," says his beautiful wife of his foray into drug addiction ("murderous contradictions"), his career as a college professor of philosophical suture").

And there are swatches of that surpassing tenderness, that respect for the intimacy and the mystery of men and women together, that Cheever alone among male American writers seems capable of producing: Ezekiel's letter to his girlfriend, "exalted by the diagnostics of love"; his safari for fox grapes in the hoarfrost to prepare his wife's favorite jelly; notations on the loneliness of single men in Chinese restaurants; the irony of Christmas; rain dripping from gun towers.

Very well. Cheever has left Shady Hill in a black van through the twilight zone and into hell. (He has, in fact, taught at Sing Sing.) Inside *Falconer*, Ezekiel is unknowingly cured of his addiction, subdues the past and, with the help of a miracle, escapes—just as, with the help of an earlier miracle, his lover Jody had escaped. This strikes me as being at least one miracle too many, especially as it comes on top of several improbabilities: Ezekiel's shooting up before college lectures, his having an affair with Jody, the presence of so many good Samaritans at so many crucial moments, et cetera. But what was implicit in *Bullet Park*—the imagery of a kind of muscular Episcopalianism—runs rampant in *Falconer*: Ezekiel's durance vile is full of miracles and prophets, mechanical and plastic Holy Ghosts, ciboriums and chalices, the Eucharist, and "fallen men" in "the white light" beyond redemption. And Ezekiel himself is almost literally resurrected from the dead, bloody but unbowed.

Is this symbolism necessary? I'm not sure. It sent me to the Bible to read up on Ezekiel (which in Hebrew means "God strengthens"), and God *was* in a bad mood in that book, wrathing at the mouth, tossing around the twelve tribes, rattling dry bones. It also sent me to William Butler Yeats to read up on falcons: "Turning and turning in the widening gyre... the centre cannot hold... Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world." I'm still not sure. And yet a certain anarchy is proposed.

Into what does Ezekiel escape? Into, apparently, an idea of love not as a sanctuary but as a relinquishing. Sanctuaries are prisons. Those whom we love, we liberate (or evict) into the pursuit of their self-interest. Ezekiel and Jody will never meet again. Out of extremity, Cheever seems to be saying, emerges an irreducible and per-

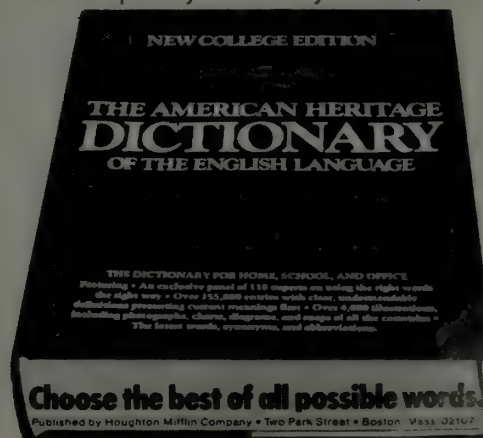
severing *me*, and a laissez-faire economy of the emotions. Where he's going, Ezekiel won't have much use for his wife, son, brother, father, or hero-in. There is no country but the self, and its anthem is a whistle.

Sentence by sentence, scene by scene, *Falconer* absorbs and often haunts. As a whole, it confounds. Shady Hill has been reversed, turned inside out like a glove or one of those stars that ends up, under pressure of gravity, a black hole in space: the cell. And like a black hole, it transmits mysterious signals. It seems more asserted than felt, more willed than imagined, and an odd valedictory tone predominates, as if everything must be left behind in order for the self to forage for a new connection... with what? Angels, moons, freedom? Since any Cheever is better than most of what passes for adult fiction nowadays, he is entitled to make his departures when he wants to, in whatever direction he chooses. It is sad, though, that one of the few novelists who knows how to write about the dialectic between men and women (and their children) with a gentle seriousness, a palpable joy, should have made himself a stranger. ■■■■

HARPER'S/APRIL 1977

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# LE TOUR BABEL

A review of the Centre Pompidou

by Nathan Silver

**R**EMEMBER "national architecture"? Books used to be written about it—particularly in terms of modern architecture, where, despite the discovery of the International style (Philip Johnson's and Henry-Russell Hitchcock's optimistic name for the modern movement when it finally got to America), there was still a recognizable Italian style, Brazilian style, even French style. Few if any traces of national architecture are discernible in the world's latest great building. I'm not referring to the tallest, of course, because that doesn't matter anymore. (Since the Empire State Building, the tallest buildings have been beneath notice.) This one, despite its star qualities, has not set new records in height, area, volume, cost, or anything except perhaps publicity. The Centre Pompidou in Paris is a building which nevertheless provokes profitable musing.

For readers interested in architecture who may have been in comas or lead mines at the end of January, I should say that the Centre was the result of a big international competition. Philip Johnson and Oscar Niemeyer were the notable non-French assessors, and there were apparently no doubts about first place. The prize was given to Renzo Piano, of Milan, and Richard Rogers, of London, with an engineering firm headed by a Dane, Ove Arup; it was finally a real International, or at least an EEC mosaic, for the patient Mr. Johnson. The Centre accommodates a conglomeration of cultural institutions whose arts-ghetto concept would at first seem dreadfully familiar to New Yorkers and Washingtonians, except that in Paris

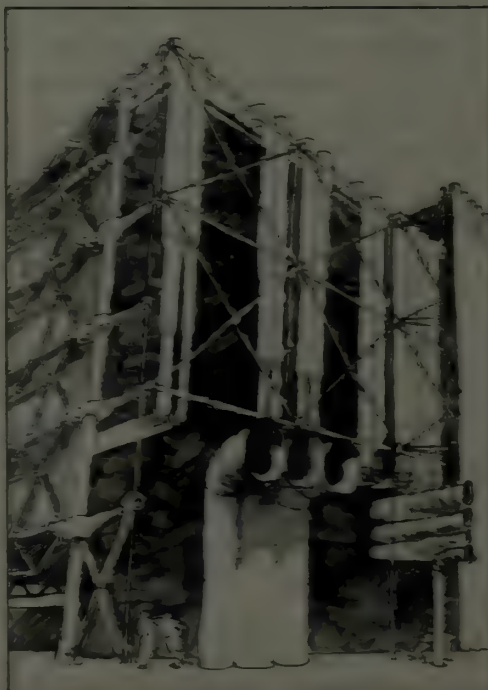
slightly more mixed and progressive items are involved: a museum of modern art, a central reference library, a museum of industrial design, and an experimental music center under Pierre Boulez (on his way to becoming the new Malraux).

Considering the bad record for competition winners, it was surprising that the Centre Pompidou was even built—particularly since Piano and Rogers refused to abide by the usual French *Bureau d'Etude* system of divided professional responsibilities, or to entrust construction management to a firm of French associated architects. The winners did things their way through furious objections, delays, changes of government, and seven lawsuits. Their way included the responsibility for all architecture and all structural and mechanical equipment (with the engineer-

ing consultants), down to interior furniture, and graphics. On a building tract equivalent to \$80 million, seven years' work was called for. Their proving the unimportance of national architecture, jobs were taken by a polyglot staff of architects, designers, and engineers working from London and Paris, who still speak among themselves (I've heard them) that wonderful ad hoc language. Eurosprak. Rogers spoke no French at all when he arrived in 1971; he says he didn't know how to buy a French pencil.

Despite the salad of languages, the cost and effort did finally produce a visually astonishing work. The Centre Pompidou is one of the few buildings that black-and-white photographs do not flatter, because the gleaming gold, silver, and transparent parts stand out against the bright red, blue, green, and yellow of circulation arteries, ventilation ductwork, water conduits, and electrical systems. With people walking through, it is kinetic sculpture on an awe-inspiring scale. Undoubted areas of climate control, security, public access, and fire safety posed serious problems, whose competent solutions are still by no means certain after a couple of visits. Yet the building is successful and popular. We may therefore pass from practical exposure to critical interpretation, to a more speculative, hermeneutic, and crabby

First, I should say that I think Piano and Rogers have produced great architecture, insofar as one can und



Stanley Black

Nathan Silver, an American architect practicing in England, is the author of *I* and the coauthor of *Adhocism*



that may mean; and perhaps it is only because a certain true spirit of the age has at last been crystallized in a monument worthy of the attempt. One can suspiciously think of this true spirit in terms of its looks only, and not of oil-refinery design, or Bowellism, or the building with its *tripes* on the outside," according to one French painter, or Archigram Modern, if one knows that entirely theoretical and not serious English group, and so on. However, to its designers and to those who have been advocating such an attitude for the past fifteen or twenty years, it is less a question of looks than of principle. This is the principle of impermanence, adaptability, and change, the open and inclusive rather than the closed and exclusive. Paradoxically, in Paris this has led to a building wholly open to the future, but also wholly closed to and exclusive of the past. Like London's great Crystal Palace of 1851 (its true spiritual ancestor, not in relative cost and complexity), it starts clean out of its urban context, but even a softening park around it insists that the meaning of modern is not vernacular Paris in its human glory, but a new style that confronts (or goes to war) with the city and knows it.

SO MANY, the Centre will always seem a costly mausoleum for the arts, in questionable taste. Its importance as architecture becomes clearer when one considers many theoretical and stylistic paces among contemporary architects in the "postmodern" period (now) have been moving into two rival camps, that the Centre Pompidou will give to the formerly very much less visible side. For the sake of quick characterization I will name, in order to describe, the preoccupations of the two camps. First, there are the interests of the Vernaculoids (a self-defining group) in matching up, fitting in, being responsive to surroundings, building in comprehensible ways. Against them is the ultratechnological aesthetic of Smack (as in the hard stuff; as in, the covered your neighborhood with augmented stainless steel). To the uncommitted, the Vernaculoids have seemed like the good guys until recently. I will reluctantly put off examples of a full discussion for another occa-

sion). But the Centre Pompidou is the first cogent, worked example of Smack aesthetic on the necessary large scale—a perfect model and quasirealization of the greatest unbuilt idea of our generation: the overweening urban megastructure, stripped entirely of the closed facade; and, most vital and expressive of all, revealing all building services—forming a "natural" exterior which seems to be innocent of aesthetic hang-ups. Whether it's honest or not, we'd better watch out, it warns us, because we may soon be moving up to Smack. There will certainly be a hundred paltry imitators since *tripes*-on-the-outside means open space on the inside, handy for office buildings. The idea of a dozen high-rise mini-Pompidous festooned across the London, New York, or Dallas skyline, their multicolored spaghetti strands vying with the sunset, is curiously dispiriting. But the modest and often humane triumphs of the Vernaculoid camp have nothing to compare, nothing recent that is, with this astounding example of Smack. The postmodern period's opposing sides may at last be truly drawn.

Some judgments must be reserved, perhaps permanently suspended, in order to see Piano and Rogers's work as even alloyed greatness. It stands to reason that ultratechnology ought to be technologically adequate. So, considering the self-imposed intentions, we should assume that those tubes, trusses, and giant cast-steel knucklebones are not primarily sculpture. Yet there is more than a whiff of aestheticism about having guts on the outside; it's unnecessary to draw labored organic parallels in order to provide the plain functional insight that bodies usually have their skins outside their guts for practical reasons, such as making them easier to protect against injury and the weather. The designers' ideals of adaptability and change may begin to sound like fantasy when such vast cost (if also beauty) is tied up in the complex preset forms. On the good side, full-fledged Smack certainly is *not* the most arrogant approach one comes across. At the Centre Pompidou the ventilation extracts look like monumental telephone earpieces sticking out of the ground, which may be overelaborate but is nicely expressive. On University Place in New York (and ten thousand other American streets) an air-conditioning exhaust practically knocks the

pedestrian flat with its unexpected blast, because it has only a hidden louver set in the wall.

"Invisible" exhausts are more properly examples of Minimalism, the non-design which American cities have always specialized in, than of Smack, which the Centre Pompidou, at least, shows to be a much more self-conscious aesthetic. Before the Centre came along, ultratechnology was easier to admire in the abstract (e.g., in the U.S.A. of a European imagination), just as vernacular architecture was easier to admire on holiday or in the seductive pages of *Architecture Without Architects*. Good luck to them both, and in the impending struggle for predominance, let the chips fall where they may. I'm not at all certain where the influence of the Centre will begin and end. There is a decidedly non-American feel about it; it is architectural Eurospraak, perhaps revealed in many small clues. While American architects may have their own formal hang-ups (often more precious, or otherwise worse), the ultratechnology of Smack isn't one of them. At least not yet. ■■■

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Andrew J. DuBrin

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(Continued from page 36) gling men at Harvard, too, intellectually spendthrift men, who squandered what education offered them in preparation for their futures. But was it an accident that the film about life at Radcliffe and Harvard which I saw shortly before I closed up shop at Briggs had been made at Harvard, not at Radcliffe, by two male, not female, students in Alice's department, and that, whatever its shortcomings, it was enough professional to be under consideration for distribution by the Harvard Alumni Office? There was money to be earned from a training in Visual Studies, and this the male students had been quick to see; they had no doubt seen it the day they registered in the department. "Hardest basic fact, and only entrance to all facts"—the quotation is from Whitman, and Whitman of course hadn't money in mind when he spoke of this "miracle of miracles" and "most spiritual of earth's dreams"; he was speaking of personal identity, "yours for you . . . as mine for me," is how he put it. Yet I borrow his words in order to bring into connection the most spiritual and most material of our impulses, for it would require a poor imagination not to see the extent to which the search for a personal identity depends on the way in which we earn our livings—can it be a surprise that the Existential imperative, that we not be defined by our function, has so often rationalized the cessation of function? The fierce imperative to make money, and not for one year or five but forever, puts all college men at an advantage over women in the quest for identity. In this far at least, that a man's most mindless excursion into education is likely to improve his capacity to earn the money by virtue of which he holds his place as head of the family, he must be said, however wryly, to need his degree more than most women need theirs. I was told that at Harvard Commencement exercises in 1971—I had already left Cambridge—many members of the Radcliffe graduating class signaled their ever-increasing assimilation into the great male university by demanding yet another evidence of sexual justice: equal admissions with men. Protest being a peaceable thing in 1971, they made their desire known not by shouting or stampeding the ceremonies nor even by taking off their clothes but by wearing conspicuous

equal-signs on their academic gowns. It is questionable whether this particular demand will be as quickly met as, in today's enthusiasm for the rights of women, some of these girls expected: the liberated students of Radcliffe may not be familiar with the sexual character of money but I suspect that the Harvard Corporation understands that the farther Harvard moves from being a bachelors' club, the less money it can count on from its alumni. How interesting it would be, though, if—oh, most crass and pernicious thought!—Harvard could actually proceed on this basis of economic reality and decide boldly and openly to distribute all its places in college solely on the strength of a student's intention to be a wage-earner. So far as male students are concerned, this would eliminate only the tiniest millionaire minority, which is itself sufficient disaster to guarantee that it will never be tried, but in the case of women what a most powerful change in the direction of gravity and discipline it would bring about in women's view of themselves and of their purpose in continuing their educations beyond high school! What would have begun as an act of sexual invidiousness, because it would inevitably reduce the number of women admitted to the university, would finally bring about the greatest advance in the emancipation of women since university degrees were put within their reach.

At any rate, these were the irresponsible thoughts which occupied my mind as I studied a little newspaper called *Radcliffe News from the College* which followed me to the country a month or two after my husband and I left Briggs Hall. The paper, full of happy photographs, was a report of Commencement activities; the self-approval it managed to communicate without outright boastfulness was not unfamiliar to me from other promotional material sent to me by various colleges through the years, and not for the first time it made me wonder whether all educational institutions had to admire themselves this inordinately. Was it an unavoidable hazard of the trade? There was one story in particular that held my attention, for it seemed to me to suggest far more ground for self-doubt than self-congratulation. Captioned "Three Seniors," it carried the subhead "Three Radcliffe Seniors are photographed as they pursue activities typical of Commencement

Week." One of these seniors was American, half Middle Eastern, and obviously she had been focused upon cause of this ethnic interest. She was among the group which had worn equal-signs in indication of its wish for equal admissions with Harvard but her confidence in the protest was qualified by the sense of a world perhaps not yet ready for so much enlightenment: "The chances of the University accepting an equal number of men and women is nil," she told the reporter, "partly because of Harvard's inertia, but largely because of very little external pressure for equality for women." The story then continues: "She is to travel around Europe with friends next year, then to Africa and India. I feel restless right now," she admitted, "sounds corny, but ultimately I do want to use my life to affect others in a positive way although right now I'm not really sure exactly how." "To affect others in a positive way." The vocabulary of female self-hallucination seems to have significantly altered since I was in college. I and my college contemporaries wanted to "do" something or at most to "be" something, by which we meant that we wanted to find a vocation, no matter what, which justified our feeling of having moved beyond the women who hadn't our educational advantage. Now apparently a Radcliffe graduate is enough satisfied that she has something to wish to turn her energy to influencing and changing the lives of others. The difference is not a negligible one, and it points, I think, to a presumptuousness which is not especially attractive if we separate it from other aspects of the present-day undergraduate personality but which, together with the confusion it produces, is at last only saddening. Confusion, however, is the persisting element of the long years which separate me from college time from the present time, and it proposes—perhaps wrongly; I can hope so—a good reason why the dream of female equality, so little advanced since I was an undergraduate, will soon again be wholly lost to us. One of our outstanding women philosophers can do no better for its sake than to encourage such flaccid sentimental idealism as this, what chance, indeed, have we for a female social ideal equal to the stupendous task of achieving full citizenship for the second sex?

HARPER'S/APRIL



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34	D	R	Y	A	S	D	U	S	T	B	L	Y										

#### Solution to the March Puzzle

##### Notes for "Crazy Quilt"

**Across:** 1. cross-patches; 11. listlessness; pun (refers to *The Mikado*: Ko-Ko had "a little list"); 12. (s)entry; 13. galiot, anagram; 14. s(wee-t.)ly; 15. bidet, anagram; 16. reciprocate, anagram; 17. sat-in; 21. nor-the-R.N.'s; 23. cro(S-sex-am-I)ne; 24. price tag, Leontyne; 25. (a)s-a-ne(t); 26. echo, hidden; 29. amerce, hidden; 31. se(E.)r(mon); 32. p-aren't; 33. terribly, anagram after omitting "a"; 34. Dr(yasdust)s, anagram. **Down:** 1. clearances, anagram; 2. rings, two meanings; 3. (m)ost-rich; 4. sti(let)-tos, "let" in "sot, its" reversed; 5. S-Lo!-Sh!; 6. saw-bones; 7. steer, anagram; 8. et(Hi)c.; 9. sleets, reversal of "steels"; 10. systematical, anagram; 17. sor(ce)ry; 18. pirated, anagram; 19. rerents, anagram; 20. inanely, anagram; 22. comm(a)-it; 27. hears, homonym; 28. sera, reversal; 30. (n)ears.



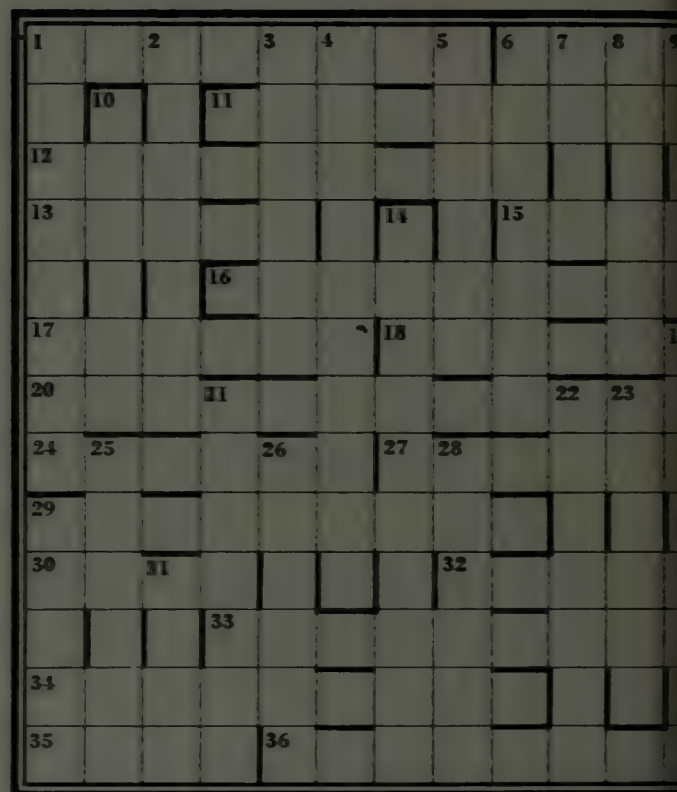
# PUZZLE

## HEADHUNTING

by Richard Maltby, Jr. (with acknowledgments to Zander of *The Listener*)

**This month's instructions:** The first letter of each answer is out of place in the diagram. Thus, if the answer to a clue were SLEEP, it would be entered as LSEEP, LESEP, or LEEPS. Three diagram entries, at 1A, 20A, and 36A, are unclued, and must be deduced by filling in the rest of the diagram. These three are spelled normally, with the first letter at the beginning, where it belongs. The three are thematically related and one contains two words. Clue answers are all common words; there is one proper name. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 95.



### CLUES

#### ACROSS

1. See instructions (8)
6. You'll get distinction by backing this school (4)
11. Stands in things that can make you turn pale (9)
12. Ladders constructed behind street hedges (9)
13. Brags all about dresses (5)
15. Dribbled halfway and ran (4)
16. Make a proposition, lust wildly after love, but it's all in the head (9)
17. Sounds like more upstanding author (6)
18. A major character of *Roots* is drivel (6)
20. See instructions (7, 5)
24. Liquor—you get tight with it (6)
27. Less than par performance from bride I sullied (6)
29. Finish on the outside of candleholder has settled comfortably (9)
30. Reluctant, with nothing to be lost, I get plastered (4)
32. Laugh about drink overturned—that's silly (5)
33. Rents were renegotiated for Californian, perhaps (9)
34. Bad reactions from works of art (9)
35. I and the lady almost become engaged (4)
36. See instructions (8)

### DOWN

1. Chatter cast of actors, etc. (8)
2. Bottom's up endlessly—a soaking, Saturday or Sunday (10)
3. Hammer screw head on shelf (6)
4. Foam on stout—difficult to control (10)
5. Shows the way to head off drug dealers (6)
6. What Marlon Brando yelled in *Streetcar*, right, chief (4)
7. Kind of vitamin? It's found in the body (4)
8. Rail splitting gathering with a traitor (6)
9. Cutting end is out of commission (5)
10. Confer riches, but at heart there's irony! (6)
14. I can reproduce a product moving around Long Island (10)
19. Herbert travels north with the flock (8)
21. It's a chopper and French brood over it (7)
22. Disfiguring object in Chinese dynasty (7)
23. A bit of good fortune as easily causes discomfort (6)
25. Prize tees me off (6)
26. Alligators turned up on end of beach, producing burn (6)
28. Shows self-satisfaction that's present endlessly, but ishly (6)
29. Pitfall, perhaps, for Lutherans, somewhat retroactive (6)
31. Grand parties can't get started—too bad (4)

### CONTEST RULES

Send completed diagram with name and address to Headhunting, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by April 11. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened will receive a one-year

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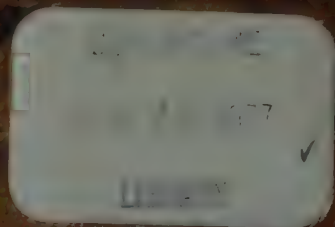
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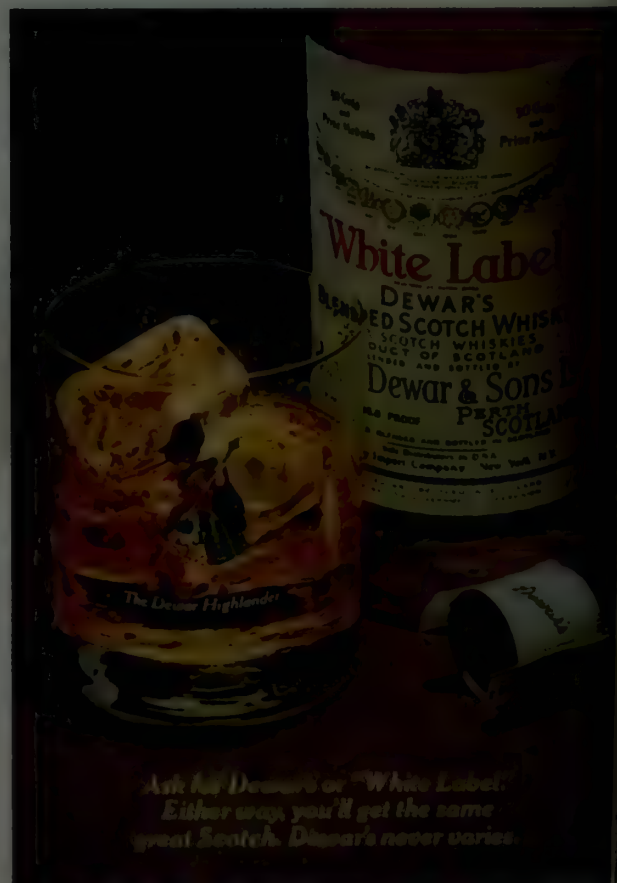
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# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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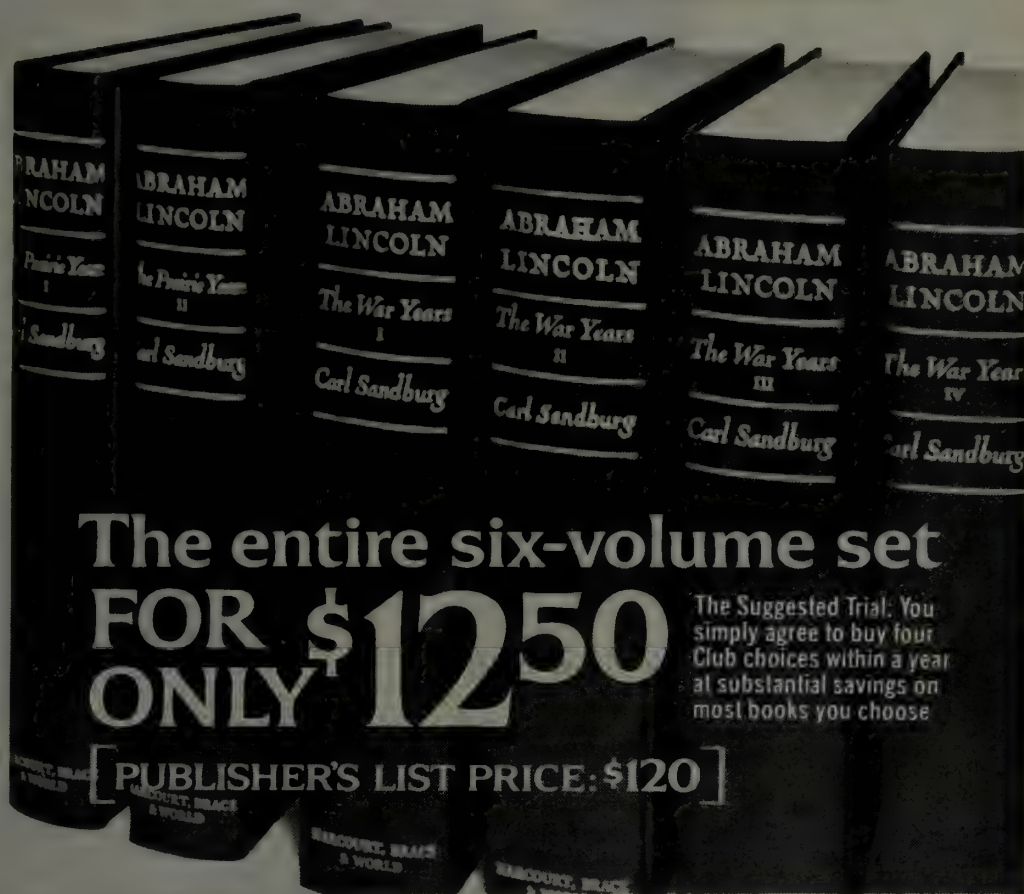
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Brand V Menthol	11	0.7
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Brand M	8	0.5
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\*Av. per cigarette by FTC method



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Box: 1 mg. "tar", 0.1 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.



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Published monthly by Harper's Magazine Company, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, a division of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. John Cowles, Jr., Chairman; Otto A. Silha, President; Donald R. Dwight, Vice President; Charles W. Arnason, Secretary; William R. Beattie, Treasurer. Subscriptions: \$8.97 one year. Foreign except Canada and Pan America: \$1.50 per year additional. For advertising information contact Harper-Atlantic Sales, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Other offices in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Copyright © 1977 by Harper's Magazine Company and Tribune Company, Inc. All rights reserved. The trademark *Harper's* is used by Harper's Magazine Company under license, and is a registered trademark owned by Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated. Printed in the U.S.A. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Please send Form 3579 to Harper's Magazine, 1255 Portland Place, Boulder, Colo. 80323.

**SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE:** Harper's Magazine, 1255 Portland Place, Boulder, Colorado 80323. For changes of address, provide both old address (use address label from latest issue) and new address, including zip codes. Allow six weeks advance notice.



# THE SHIP THAT BROUGHT AMERICA ITS TASTE FOR SCOTCH.

December 5, 1933 was a noteworthy day for Scotch drinkers. For it was the first time in 13 years that drinking it was legal. Prohibition was repealed.

Perhaps even more noteworthy: it was the day Cutty Sark landed in America. A Scots Whisky already legendary in other civilised parts of the world.

Scotch had been imported into this country before but had also been largely ignored. Cutty Sark, however, with its particular smoothness, soon captured a large and loyal following of Americans with good taste.

Today, wherever you go in America, you will find the bottle with the famous ship "Cutty Sark" on the label. And the distinctive Scots Whisky inside.

Who would have thought back in 1933 that some day people would be able to cross the United States without changing ships?



ITY SA



LENDED  
TS WHIS



# LETTERS

## The lonely crowd

While Roger Rosenblatt's article ["The Self as Sybarite," March] presents a clear picture of the avaricious singles hustler who has turned over a lucrative stone for selling his wares, he has riddled his article with the same old timeworn equation that singleness necessarily equates with loneliness. I resent his closing paragraph in which he writes that "loneliness will prevail over dignity every time, and that even the most sensible people in the world will eventually crawl for company, if necessary, or jump from a plane." True, there does exist a rather wide group of *Cosmopolitan*-reading singles who would go to almost any extreme to find

a mate, but outside of these there is a stable, responsible group of unmarried individuals who take their lives, their work, and their responsibilities to family, friends, and community seriously, and who resent being labeled as selfish, aimless, perverse animals who live out lonely lives in a frenzied state of grasping desperation. To assume that the state of the married nation holds a corner on happy companionship is absurd. When more than one out of 100 husbands and wives have been shot, stabbed, or severely beaten by their spouses, and 5 million children have been shot, beaten, or stabbed by their parents, there must be something seriously lacking in the marital union.

Our commercial society leads as many marrieds as singles down the road of

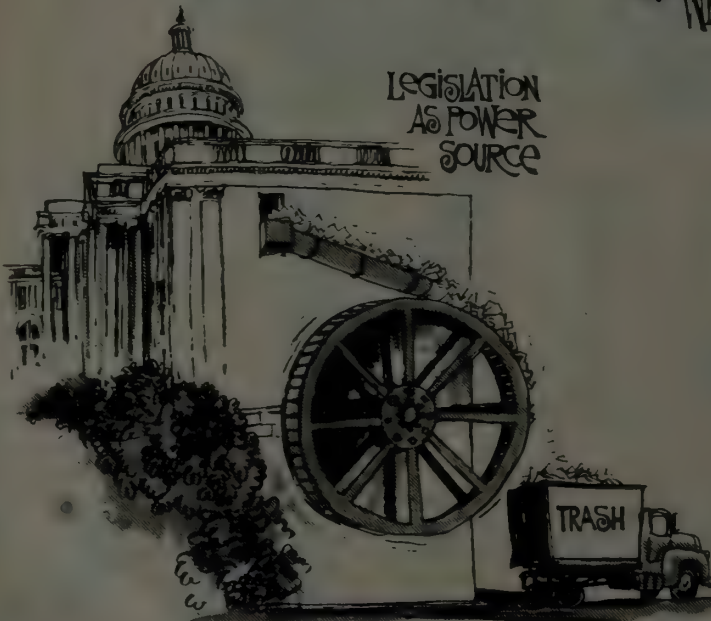
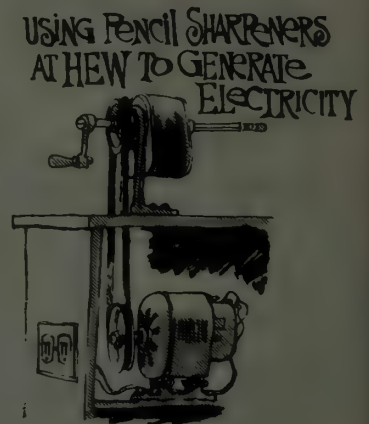
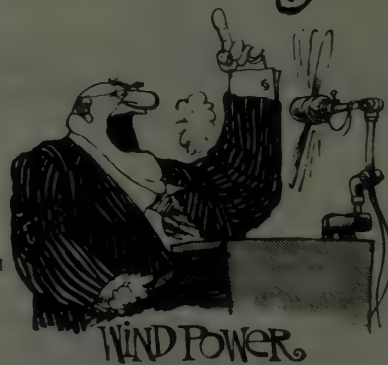
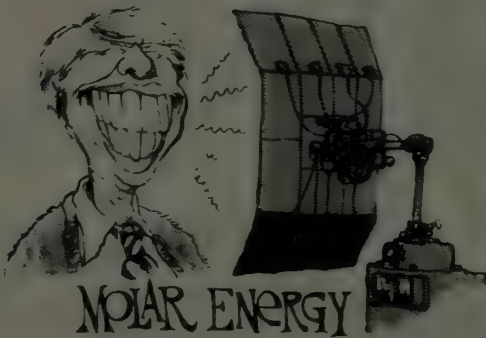
self-fulfillment and personal enlightenment in an attempt to give some substance to an empty, boring existence which overstimulation has robbed us of our ability to distinguish the wheat from the chaff. And everyone, regardless of marital status, is caught up in the confusion.

Loneliness and desperation are not characteristics peculiar to any one segment of American society, and I suggest Mr. Rosenblatt leave this kind of wholesale labeling to the hustlers who make it their business to perpetuate such myths.

MARY JO BRASHE  
Sumner, Wash.

One naturally cringes from sociological retorts after reading Roger Rosenblatt's fine poke at the extroverted singles.

## ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES



THUS FAR, HARNESSING THE ENERGY OF THE SON HAS MET WITH ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS.



MAGNIFY



# Product liability is like a box that's ticking.

## We don't know what's inside, a clock or a time bomb.



Not that long ago, product liability was just another form of insurance coverage. Something a manufacturer turned to on those rare occasions when somebody got hurt using his product.

Then, almost imperceptibly at first, some curious things began to happen.

Product liability cases, which in the early 1960's were running at a fairly predictable rate, began to increase at an unstable pace.

If these trends continue unchecked, the results could prove disastrous. Not just for people who make products, but for people who buy them.

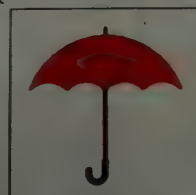
That's us. All of us.

Already, the prices of many goods and services have begun to escalate because of the need for additional product liability protection. Some manufacturers are even reluctant to introduce new, improved products. Indeed, there have already been cases where the "new, improved" label was cited as evidence of the older product's deficiency.

Why are we telling you this? Because we all stand a better chance of solving these problems if we understand what it is we're dealing with. We'd like to know what you're thinking and we'd be happy to share our ideas with you. Just drop a letter to our Office of Consumer Information, One Tower Square, Hartford, Conn. 06115.

Although product liability is still a potential, rather than an actual, problem, it's something that should concern all of us. Because the symptoms are there. And if the day arrives when we find that product liability is, in fact, a crisis, it may be too late for a solution.

Tick, tick, tick.



### THE TRAVELERS



## LETTERS

gles and magazines lately flaunting themselves in our cities. After all, any urbanite foolish enough to get his name and phone number printed on a T-shirt deserves a few crank calls.

But as silly—indeed, as desperate—as all this bourgeois fraternalism is, can the American city really be mocked for advertising itself to itself? Sure, there is something embarrassingly provincial about Big Apple campaigns and singles guides to Washington, like wearing a bright red Harvard sweatshirt around Cambridge. And yes, it does often seem as if these slick eponymous city mags exist mostly for the puckering lonelies swimming through Bloomingdale's on their way to Maxwell's on their way to hell.

Yet after all else is argued and ridiculed, the city still ends up meaning commerce and transportation for those who live—yes, live—there. Its health depends on the many queer things its inhabitants do and buy after work. And in many cases—as in public relations, broadcasting, publishing, acting—that labor is mysteriously spent to keep everyone doing and buying, going out and showing off.

And come now, Roger Rosenblatt: no

one wants to stay single forever. No matter how many assurances, no matter even if he dies unmarried. All he wants is the chance to find some intimacy, and stratification may be the easiest way to do that in a molecular urban environment.

Frankly, I'd rather eat in a restaurant that has yet to be featured in *New York* magazine. And I'd rather spend my money in quiet cafés than stuffy singles bars. But then, I'm not a New Yorker—I just happen to live here.

ALLAN RIPP  
New York, N.Y.

## Growing ideas

At an art-history symposium a few years ago, one of the "heavies" from Harvard flayed a young colleague's report. Rather than being mortified, the young professor showed great delight at the attention paid him. As he later explained to me, his paper had at least merited criticism.

Remembering that incident makes me understand why it is that Sally Helgesen's cranky article about William Irwin Thompson's Lindisfarne colony

["Visions of Futures Past," March] was so enjoyable to read. As unhappy as she seems to be with the colony's unorthodox methods, her expressed frustration at its lack of instant success pays tribute, even if unwittingly, to Thompson's goals. And it is Thompson's search for alternative modes of living, not Thompson himself, that is the important thing.

I hope Miss Helgesen realizes that the creative process has rarely been orderly—certainly not, in any case, as methodical and correct as she would like. False starts are inevitable, and the early stages of innovation, alas, often costly, even unprofitable. Miss Helgesen's article, I presume, went through a few preliminary drafts which she might not wish to see reviewed unsympathetically in the press. It is even possible that, as the solution to a fish-farm problem at Lindisfarne was discovered in marsh that had been under everybody's nose all along, Miss Helgesen discovered better angles to writing her article as she developed her original ones. To ridicule Lindisfarne for a bad start in developing a fish farm that eventually went well enough is not only petty but rather ridiculous.

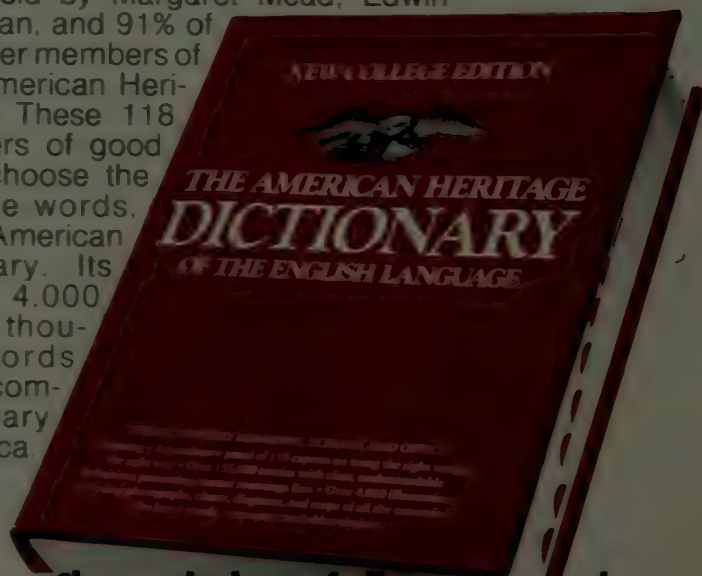
STEPHEN WHITNEY  
Washington, D.C.

# Would you flaunt convention with Margaret Mead?



Only if you want to *flaunt* (show off) how conventional you are. When you *defy* convention, you *flout* it. The distinction is upheld by Margaret Mead, Edwin Newman, and 91% of the other members of

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I write to congratulate you on your good fortune to have a contributor of such clear and practical intelligence, to say nothing of wit, as Sally Helgesen. Her piece is masterly in its precision and her analysis is devastating. The courage required to publicly expose the emperor's nakedness is rare.

I look forward to more dispassionate analyses of modern hokum.

LARRY WING  
Philadelphia, Pa.

## The new China

In 1975 my husband and I spent several months traveling in the People's Republic of China. Our itinerary included Canton, Peking, Nanking, Shanghai, Hangchow, Shenyang, and Shanghai. Part of our travel was completely independent of work-study groups. We arranged our own itinerary to travel in the countryside and were left to our own devices.

Ben J. Wattenberg writes in "Mao's Funeral" [February] that he is wo



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100's: 12 mg. "tar," 0.9 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC Method.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

# MERIT

Kings & 100's



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RABBIT

The limited

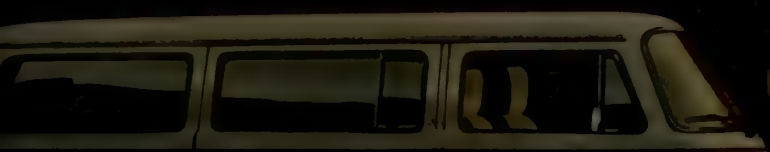
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Rare scotch.



**RARE  
SCOTCH**

86 Proof Blended Scotch Whisky ©1977 Paddington Corp., N.Y.

## LETTERS

ried and troubled by what he sees there. After reading his article, I, too, am worried and troubled. The American in me worries because some readers may not question the issues he raises. The Chinese in me is troubled by the impressions he has brought back with him.

Surely he is aware that the building of a new China dates back only to 1949. If "American Presidents and an American Secretary of State compete to be the first among their friends to eat bird's nest soup in Peking," if the American "press beatifies Chairman Mao, so be it. No small miracle to feed and clothe 800 million people in such a short time. And the Americans know a miracle when they see one.

To say that China has made only moderate progress is to wonder what kind of yardstick is taking the measure. And is it worth the spiritual cost? The oldest member in that "one tin room for a three-generation family with pallets stacked two and three deep along the walls" would tell you that he is happy to be done with hunger, disease, famine, and exploitation. He might even have some savings in the bank. Now he can share in the fruit of his labor. He has hope for his children and grandchildren. And when he retires, a collective society will provide for him. Those work teams in the paddy fields are not working as their ancestors did. They, too, are done with hunger, famine, disease, and exploitation.

China's goals and needs are different from America's. She is in a different stage of development. Tired clichés but they deserve repeating. How do we measure freedom in a collective society? Must we be hostile to a theory that is antithetical to American theory?

I care that Americans perceive the reality of China. Mr. Wattenberg cautions: "What I am saying is that the essential strategy is morality." And that is my point exactly—a plea for morality. To write of China solely within the context of her ideology affords a narrow view.

GLADYS CHAN  
New York, N.Y.

## BEN WATTENBERG REPLIES:

Since my visit to China, the description of that troubled land coming from its new rulers more closely resembles my own than Mrs. Chan's.

HARPER'S/MAY 1978



## POINT OF ORDER

Questions from the floor

by Lewis H. Lapham

ON THE MORNING of Wednesday, March 9, at about the same time that President Carter convened a press conference to talk about human rights and control of nuclear weapons, a band of terrorists seized three buildings in the capital, killed a reporter for a college radio station, wounded nineteen people who happened to be standing in the way of events, and threatened to behead as many as 115 hostages if the authorities needed further proofs of good intent. In the White House President Carter offered noble sentiments without the hope of mankind. On the other side of Pennsylvania Avenue, Hassan Abdul Khaalis, the leader of the Black Muslim sect that carried out the terrorist acts, issued demands for vengeance. His wife and five of his children had been murdered in 1973 by Black Muslims. Although sentenced to life imprisonment, the murderers still lived to mock Mr. Khaalis; he required that they be delivered into his hands for summary judgment.

Mr. Carter concluded his press conference amidst patriotic applause. Mr. Khaalis maintained his positions for the latter part of two days, his disciples holding hostages at the headquarters of the Islamic Center (seized because the United States, in the opinion of Mr. Khaalis, had made "concessions" to Israel), at the Islamic Center (seized because the director of that institution had lapsed to false doctrine), and at the District Building (a symbol of "the Establishment"). Throughout the siege Mr. Khaalis denounced his miscellaneous enemies ("You Jews, you who control the press, who control all the courts") and reiterated his demands for justice ("Heads will roll"). Early Friday morning, exhausted by his hysteria and after conferring for three hours with the

Ambassadors of Egypt, Iran, and Pakistan, he surrendered his hostages in exchange for his release without bail.

That Mr. Khaalis's conditions were granted makes an enlightening point about the steadiness and sophistication of the police. Unlike their counterparts in the learned professions they take it for granted that the United States is becoming as dangerous a place as most other countries in the world. We live in a society of hostages, if not to kings, then certainly to an increasingly large company of desperate men, if not next week in a parking lot, then maybe next year on a plane going to Omaha. Philosophers have been making this observation for at least 2,000 years, but the events of the past two or three months make the argument less abstract.

LAST FEBRUARY in Indianapolis a man with a complaint against a mortgage company wired a sawed-off shotgun to the head of a loan manager. For the next sixty-two hours he explained the reasons for his unhappiness not only to the loan manager but also to the wire services. In New Rochelle an amateur Nazi killed five people at a furniture-moving company because he thought he had been mistreated by his foreman. On the Monday before Mr. Khaalis revealed himself in Washington, an unemployed black man named Cory Moore, age twenty-five and a veteran of the Vietnam war, seized a police captain in Warrensville Heights, Ohio. He held a gun to the police captain's head for almost two days, insisting that all white people depart from the earth, or, failing that, that they burn all their money as proof of their good faith. Mr. Moore asked for a television set on which to

*Lewis H. Lapham is the editor of Harper's.*

watch the broadcast and interpretation of his own exploit, and he demanded that President Carter make public apology for "all the misdeeds done to blacks from the year 1619 to 1977." In the course of his Wednesday press conference the President said that he would talk to Mr. Moore on the telephone after Mr. Moore had released the police captain. Mr. Moore complied with the condition and, in the language of the subsequent communiqué from the White House, "spoke briefly to President Carter at 4:13 P.M., E.S.T." Neither he nor the White House discussed the text of the conversation.

Their talk could not have been spacious. Nor could it have resembled what the diplomatic correspondents sometimes refer to as "a mutually advantageous exchange of views." The two men addressed one another across impassable frontiers—between generations, between realms of experience, between weakness and strength, between the necessarily unrelenting father and the child in angry tears. For the space of maybe two minutes each held the other hostage, Mr. Carter speaking on behalf of the political and economic juggernaut against which Mr. Moore raged in vain.

While trying to think of what they might have said to one another, I was reminded of my first season as a newspaper reporter twenty years ago in San Francisco. The city editor thought I had a trustworthy face, and so I was assigned to listen to the people who showed up in the editorial anteroom with news of anonymous, and therefore inconsequential grief. They came to the newspaper as if to a court of last resort, believing with childlike innocence that newspapers stood on the side of justice. Elsewhere in the community they had suffered terrible losses. They had lost



## THE EASY CHAIR

children or the use of their hands; their houses had been burned or plundered; they had been swindled by pawnshops or insurance companies. They came every day, always with faded documents that somehow attested to the truth of whatever it was they had to say. Always they were poor, and always they believed that if only enough people could hear the story of their unhappiness, surely the public outcry would be so great as to force an exemption from the wrong that had been done them.

"I don't care what you tell them," the city editor said. "I never want to see any of them, no matter what their goddam speech is. Send them to a hospital or the cops."

For about six months, before the city editor judged me wise enough to deal with the important news at City Hall or the Chamber of Commerce, I listened to these chronicles of humiliation and despair. A few people were indeed paranoid (among them a merchant seaman who was convinced that the FBI had been following him for two years, in all of which time he had never slept twice in the same hotel or eaten twice in the same restaurant), but most of them simply didn't have the money or the connections to make good their claim to a constitutional right. Dressed in their best clothes, which were shabby and tight, they waited on benches for as long as anybody told them to wait. Even though I wanted to help them, I could do nothing to redress the balance of their suffering. Their papers weren't in order, and in a society that places its trust in bureaucratic institutions rather than in human beings the citizen without proper documents loses all hope of preference or belief. Had their statements been printed on clean paper embossed with the letterhead of, say, the Ford Foundation or the Bureau of Mines, why then, of course, arrangements could have been made and apologies would have been forthcoming. For people with the proper credentials anything is possible. No matter how implausible their proposals, whether for the defoliation of Southeast Asia or the reduction of Colorado to a slag heap, they can be assured of a serious hearing. But a man without proof of institutional identity finds himself consigned to oblivion.

During my first year as a reporter I also noticed that I passed most of my time watching police surgeons carrying

corpses offstage or bowing my way in and out of the offices of leading citizens (city commissioners, real-estate magnates, philanthropists, owners of department stores, candidates for Congress, et cetera) who had condescended to give a statement to the public. The corpses I could describe in vivid and sometimes fanciful language. The statements from the leading citizens, no matter how preposterous or self-serving, I was paid to accept without question. The more august the institution for which the gentleman spoke, the less carefully could his words be examined for error.

THE INSTITUTIONAL prejudices of society have become more pronounced during the past twenty years, with the result that everybody has become more frightened. The people behind the walls of the bureaucracies feel themselves besieged, and the people wandering in the void feel that nobody can protect them. But now the petitioners have bombs, and the plaintiffs come with guns. The communications technology circumvents the need to wait patiently in an outer office. The price of a rifle is less than the price of a lawyer. A man can command an audience by holding a gun to the head of somebody else's wife or father, thus resolving the debate about "public access."

On the morning that the Hanafis released their hostages James Reston, writing with his customary piety in the *New York Times*, regretted the fixation of the press on trivial sensations. Not that the Hanafis weren't dangerous fellows, of course, and not that they didn't raise some pretty damn serious questions about "the fragility of democracy," but their irresponsible terrorism had diverted the attention of the press from "the larger essential news of the nation" to the "violence in the streets." By "essential news" Mr. Reston meant President Carter's press conference, which he described as the most important news conference conducted by an American President since the end of World War II. But the childish press, distracted by the chance of people being beheaded in downtown Washington, had abandoned the solemn business of the state to go chasing through the streets after the carnival of murder.

Mr. Reston cannot have failed to no-

tice how much of "the larger essential news of the nation" consists of "the violence in the streets," but presumably he discounts its significance. On the same day that he deplored the loss of the statesmanlike perspective on the part of the press, the *Daily News* published as a matter of routine interest, the following communiqués from the streets of New York:

□ In a women's rest room on the sixteenth floor of a Wall Street office building, a baby girl, no more than a few minutes old, was found stuffed in a trash can. The woman who discovered the baby thought it might have been a mouse.

□ In Forest Hills, Queens, police detectives continued to look for a man who had shot and killed, apparently at random, at least five young women in the past five months.

□ In Manhattan, Oswaldo Diaz, eighteen, was sentenced to life imprisonment for stabbing to death a young woman in Central Park. Diaz had robbed the woman of \$5.56.

Of what does Mr. Reston think the world consists? How does he imagine that Yasir Arafat has come to prominence as a statesman worthy of Mr. Reston's attention? From whence does he derive the eminence of Gen. Augusto Pinochet or the shah of Iran, both of whom Mr. Reston bows down to with the grace of a practiced courtier? Perhaps Mr. Reston also failed to notice the large space assigned by the *Times* to the Hanafi raids. The paper makes use of any and all violence that it can promote into the service of money. During the last days of Gary Hart's life, the *Times* was among the bidders for exclusive rights to his funeral well address. A journalist of my acquaintance, who had taken part in what he described as a feverish auction, referred to Mr. Gilmore both as "a property" and "a great pathological natural resource."

TOGETHER WITH Andrew Young, the Ambassador to the United Nations who made an equally fatuous statement for the Monday papers about keeping terrorism out of the news, Mr. Reston apparently thinks that he can fit the hugeness of the world into the neat little paragraph of his tidy sentiment, or perhaps he sends being held hostage by people





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---

## ...Saves You Money.

---

Take long distance calling, for example. It's one of the few things that costs little more today than 25 years ago. That's because technological improvements have helped hold costs down.

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ing and manufacturing questions at the forefront of technology.

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Some might not have come at all.

---

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---

Many future innovations will be even more complex, requiring even closer interaction.

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## THE EASY CHAIR

whom he hasn't been properly introduced.

Like the press in general, Mr. Reston makes his living by being held hostage to rich and respectable people who have better manners than to make of themselves unauthorized celebrities. I don't mean to be unfair to Mr. Reston, but the unctuousness of his writing seems to me characteristic of those pillars of the community who confuse their own interests, which are the interests of the institutional citadels, with the interests of the nation as a whole. Together with the gentlemen who preside over the bureaucracies, they inhabit a city of words. If only they can give names to things, dutifully making notes of the memoranda handed out in calm, well-lighted rooms, they assume that they acquire a degree of control over the events that seem to have such a damnably unpredictable effect on the less influential subjects of the state. They remind me of a woman from Toledo, Ohio, whom I once questioned about the end of the world. During the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, I was working as a reporter for the *New York Herald Tribune*, and the city editor sent me into

the streets to conduct random interviews on the question of the imminent holocaust. For several days the papers had been tracking the doom on its way north from Havana, and the local radio stations were playing "The Star-Spangled Banner." I found the woman from Toledo in Times Square, gazing up at the news bulletin running around the Allied Chemical Building.

"Pardon me, Madam," I said, "but do you have any thoughts about the bombing of New York?"

I explained the official nature of my question, and the woman looked at me with a smile of relief.

"Oh, no," she said. "I don't live here."

"Yes, I understand that, but the bomb is expected late this afternoon."

"It doesn't concern me," she said, "I'm only here for a few days, for the shows, you see."

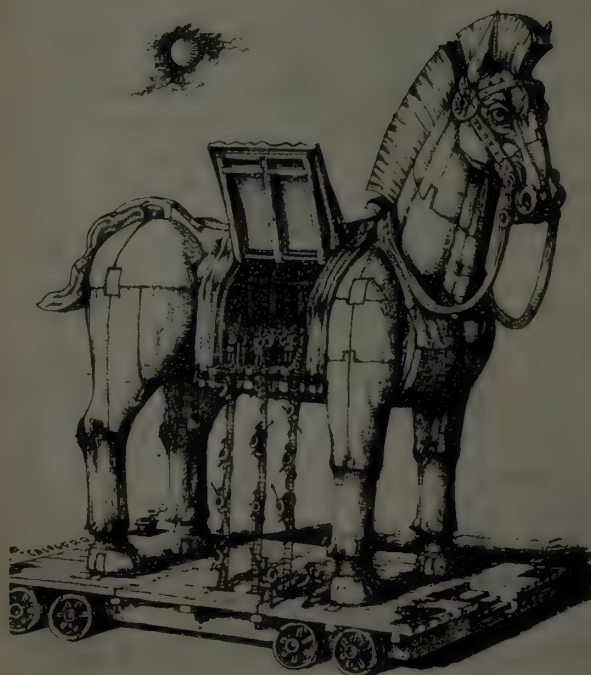
It never occurred to her that the Cubans might schedule World War III to coincide with her vacation. It is this insouciance that I still find characteristic of many social critics. They write from safe heights, looking down upon the sadness in American civilization as

if they were tourists looking across a field at Gettysburg, as if they had nothing to do with the blood in the streets.

Mr. Carter apparently does not take so complacent a view of the matter, and for this we can admire him. He knows that there are too many people in tears, if not of grief, then of rage. By speaking to Mr. Moore in Warrensville Heights he possibly saved the lives of two citizens, one of them confused and both of them terrified. In New York I heard people say that Mr. Carter has established "a dangerous precedent" that he had encouraged the psychotic element within the population, that pretty soon all kinds of crazy people with guns would be calling the White House with absurd announcements and requests. Against this line of argument I would submit that the President has a duty to protect the lives of as many people as possible. What greater task could he accomplish by so simple a means? Is it not so difficult a device as keeping him word?

On the symbolic level, Mr. Carter saves, in the person of the police captain, the country's best hope for an ideal of law and morality; in the person of Mr. Moore, he supports the aspiration, if not the violent method, of men struggling toward a sense of their own freedom and worth. Mr. Carter understands the use of symbols as the primary means of restoring a faith in government and reducing the distance between the city of words, in which Mr. Reston sits among bound volumes of the *Federalist Papers* and the city of hostages, in which babies get stuffed into trash cans and high-priced politicians suck the milk of fraud. Within the first months of his inauguration the President has shown an aptitude for the symbolic gesture. He has sent his daughter to public school, gone to stay with the Thompson family in Clinton, Massachusetts, walked whenever possible in the rain, and spoken at evangelical length about the sanctity of human rights. But symbols are like money. Unless the paper currency can be redeemed by the weight of justice, it loses its value. Among the smiling officials who applauded Mr. Carter's press conference on the morning that Mr. Khaalis took his prisoner, I wonder how many of them were made bold by the new Presidential initiative and how many of them thought it prudent to buy a gun.

# Homer is said to have used 9,000 different words.



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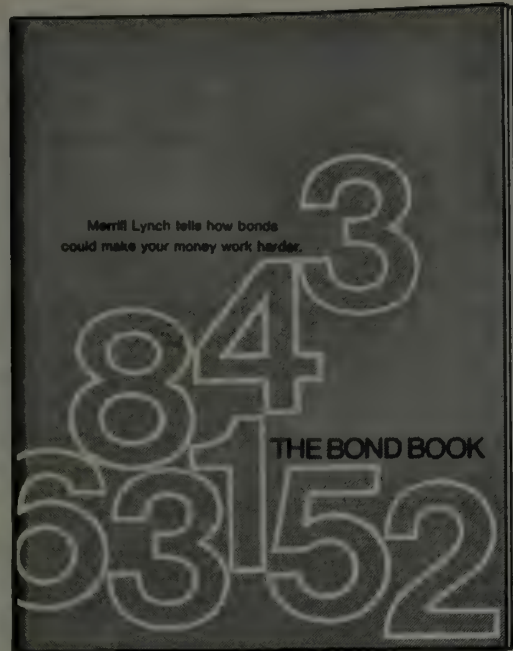
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# BRITAIN'S INEXHAUSTIBLE COMPLACENCE

Political stability endures in the midst of economic hopelessness

by T. D. Allman

**B**RITAIN MAY HAVE a million unemployed, double-digit inflation, a long-standing terrorist campaign in Northern Ireland, a decaying industrial plant producing the shoddiest goods in the Common Market, but whenever the pound loses another few cents against the dollar and the trade deficit increases by another few millions, I find myself wondering about Sir Peregrine Henneker-Heaton. His fate presents me with a parable of the British condition.

Sir Peregrine once was a figure of discreet renown, though never, reticent Englishman that he was, a person of public notoriety. Indeed, to know Sir Peregrine's identity at all was to show oneself acquainted with the inner workings of the British state in the days when one spoke of the United Kingdom as a great power. Sir Peregrine Henneker-Heaton was the supremo of British intelligence, a Machiavellian figure of the old school who would have found James Bond's fascination with technological toys a trifle vulgar. Long ago in the 1960s, when London still talked of Guy Burgess and Christine Keeler, not of trade deficits and International Monetary Fund loans, Sir Peregrine's sudden, unexplained, total disappearance shocked the metropolis,

*T. D. Allman is a former Edward R. Murrow Fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations.*

as London was then called, and steadily became a subject of grave concern at the highest levels.

What at first only was whispered in the antechambers of 10 Downing Street soon came to be muttered in the clubs of Pall Mall, and finally screamed in the headlines of the popular press. The head of British intelligence had vanished. It was a little as though Allen Dulles had gone for a walk one afternoon—as Sir Peregrine apparently had done—and disappeared without a trace. It was the kind of event that, at the height of British power, might have provoked great feats of deduction in Baker Street.

Had Sir Peregrine been kidnapped by the Russians, or by the Chinese? Or was it, as more than one of the cognescenti believed, that Sir Peregrine always had been, well, just a bit rum? Might he not soon appear in Moscow, the plans for the Skybolt missile in his valise, a girlfriend or worse by his side, to announce that all along he had been working for the triumph of the dictatorship of the proletariat over the evils of British imperialism?

At first the communiqués from New Scotland Yard were encouraging. Numerous members of the public had come forward to assist the authorities with their inquiries. A Cornish fisherman had seen Sir Peregrine board a

private submarine in dense fog. A Welsh shepherdess had observed him disappear into the mists of Mount Snowdon. For several months, the vanished custodian of every one of Britain's most vital state secrets was seen riding the Bakerloo line, gambling away large sums of money in Latin-American casinos, or sleeping on a park bench across from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

In a sense, no news over the following months was good news. There was no sudden press conference in Moscow, no sudden revelation that Sir Peregrine had given the Chinese a hydrogene bomb, and been given a residence visa in return. Gradually the story retreated from page 1 to page 18 to an occasional mention by the columnists. Gradually the British decided to deal with the disappearance of Sir Peregrine Henneker-Heaton the same way they were dealing with their economic problems.

They decided not to think about it anymore.

**A** FEW MONTHS AGO in London I bought a copy of the tabloid *Daily Mirror*. The *Mirror*, with its vast circulation, photographs of half-naked women, and monosyllabic prose, is one of Britain's most popular newspapers. It is the publication of the British people as a whole, the





# A Message For Everyone Who Loves To Write.

By Ernest P. Weckesser, Ph.D.

with

Edward C. Lane

Several years ago, while I was teaching college in Indiana, I stumbled across a hobby that has changed my life.

Oddly enough, I discovered it while browsing through magazines in a drug store. In almost every magazine there were dozens of small ads listing one basic thing — printed information.

The financial magazines contained small ads for "newsletters," "reports" and "booklets." The science and mechanics magazines were loaded with classified ads for all sorts of "how-to" books, "instructions," "plans," etc.

I was most surprised by the fact that almost all the ads were placed by individuals — not by large companies.

This was too fascinating to resist. I decided to place two small ads myself.

I put together a booklet containing some of my best wine recipes and another about Australia. A few days after the ads appeared I stopped at the post office.

When I looked through the little glass window of my P.O. box, I almost dropped my key. The box was stuffed — jammed — packed full of envelopes. Hundreds of orders containing cash and checks!

When the dust finally settled around our house, I talked with other successful advertisers. I discovered . . .

1. A young graduate student in Texas markets a body-building manual for \$3.00. He uses one classified ad in six magazines. It's strictly a spare-time activity but he reports earnings of \$300.00 monthly.

\*\*\*

2. A retired U.S. Army sergeant in Arizona wrote a 24-page booklet. His three \$17.00 classified ads brought him \$300.00 in cash orders.

\*\*\*

3. A Kentucky woman selling a 15-page travel booklet for \$1.00 was literally swamped with orders. In 87 days her classified ad running in 12 magazines made a net profit of \$2,230.00 on a gross of \$3,250.00. She was 69 years of age, widowed and living alone in her apartment at the time.

\*\*\*

4. A husband-wife team in Oregon compiled their own "how-to" booklet. They put a small display ad in one newspaper. Within only 45 days that one ad pulled \$9,450.00 in cash orders.

Don't misunderstand. This isn't a get-rich-quick scheme. It's a business and, as such, is speculative. But test ads are cheap (as low as \$3.50 for a national ad) and the profit potential is staggering! An Ohio man I spoke with put a large display ad in a national Sunday supplement. A few days later the orders started pouring in — mail sacks full of cash!

Within the next two months he received over \$220,000.00 in CASH orders for his \$3.00 booklet.

I realize this all sounds too good to be true. But here's a way you can actually verify what I'm saying in your home or office.

## TRY THIS TEST

★ First, obtain several magazines containing classified ads. You don't have to buy them . . . just borrow them from the library.

★ Second, get old copies of the same magazines — at least 10-13 months old.

★ Third, turn to the classified sections of each and place the old magazine beside the new magazine.

★ Fourth, compare both. Cross-check each one to see how many ads in the old magazine are still running in the new edition.

### THIS IS AN ABSOLUTE PROFIT TEST.

It has to be. People don't continue running ads for over a year unless they're making money doing so.

Consider these facts:

• It's simple to begin . . . just an hour a week can get you started at home.

• It's inexpensive to begin . . . I'll show you how to place a test ad in a national magazine for only \$13.50. Your total starting investment can be less than \$25.00.

• You don't have to write a booklet yourself. I'll show you an easy way to get hundreds of different books at wholesale prices or below.

• If your test ad produces even a modest profit you can run wild with it. The whole nation is yours.

• Your profit margin may exceed 1,000%! My wine book cost 36 cents to print yet sold for \$3.98.

• It's private. Even if you begin making \$25,000-\$35,000 a year you can run your entire business from your home or apartment.

• It's safe. Information booklets and newsletters aren't breakable, mechanical or chemical. They're easy to mail in small envelopes and can be stored in a closet.

• The market is almost infinite. My own "best-sellers" include . . . **101 Ways To Fix Hamburger, How To Win Contests, How To Stop Smoking, How To Make Champagne At Home**, and others . . .

I want you to see this for yourself. That's why I put everything . . . every secret . . . in a simple, easy-to-follow beginners guide. It's entitled, **Dollars In Your Mailbox**.

It shows you . . .

- Where to advertise . . . which magazines and newspapers are most profitable.
- Where to get national ads for less than \$15.00.
- Where to get hundreds of books wholesale.
- How to have your own booklets printed for less than 12¢ each.
- How to save up to 40% on all printing.
- How to get "free" advertising and publicity.
- How to start with no money in stock or supplies.
- How to word your advertisement.
- How to start your own newsletter.
- How to rent your mailing list for extra profit.

### PLUS

All the forms, lists, and details you'll need to begin.

When your book arrives, take two weeks (14 days) to examine it. If you're not delighted, just return it. We'll send your refund check within 3 working days — no delays, no nonsense. There is absolutely no risk to you.

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Send me **Dollars In Your Mailbox** right away. I understand I may keep it for 14 days. If I'm not delighted, I may return it for a complete refund sent to me within three working days.

On that basis, here's my \$9.95.

☐ Enclosed is my check or money order.

☐ Charge Master Charge

☐ Charge BankAmericard

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Expiration Date (month, year)

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journal that reflects the real interests of the nation. And here in the *Daily Mirror*, unlike in the *Times*, *Guardian*, and *Financial Times*, and among the unrepresentative classes who read them, I discovered there was indeed some genuine recognition of the fate confronting Britain today.

"DOOMED TO DIE!" the banner headline in the *Daily Mirror* announced.

The subhead explained, "The tragic plight of 1,000 beagles." Beneath a photograph of the condemned dogs behind bars, the caption explained: "This is death cell, down on the farm. The beagles behind its bars are among ONE THOUSAND facing slaughter."

Next to this story there appeared a full-length photograph of a Playboy bunny who had just become a figure of national celebrity by cancelling her romance with the Fulham soccer star George Best. So much for the major news stories of the day.

In a corner of the page there was an inconspicuous little notice. "Our trade last month plunged into the red by £310 million," it announced, "more than double the trade gap for the previous month."

Recently, when emissaries of the International Monetary Fund arrived in London to negotiate one of those "crucial" loans that keep what is left of the pound and Britain afloat, they encountered no more of a crisis atmosphere in the passages of Whitehall than one does among the British media, in the Underground, or among the Mayfair demimonde. Several important documents required immediate duplication. But the lamp in one of the ministry's few photocopying machines had burnt out, and no one knew how to fix it. The IMF technocrats found in London not an air of desperation, but the kind of undulating lethargy once associated with the Ottoman Empire.

In the midst of their much-publicized troubles, the British remain, as they have been for as long as anyone can remember, polite, unperturbed, combining a national sense of innate superiority with a seeming unwillingness to bestir themselves for anything at all. At Oxford, the vast collection of the Bodleian Library remains uncatalogued in any sense that would have meaning in the Library of Congress. Britain's technological and intellectual resources are withering away, as the best minds emigrate, and institutions 1,000 years

old make do with less real income than they had fifty years ago. University staff members have had no pay raises for more than five years, in a country where the annual inflation rate recently hit 40 percent. Yet the silver candelabra are still there at High Table, even if they are no longer polished.

EVERYTHING EVERYONE says now about Britain's economic woes is, of course, absolutely correct. But the sense of sudden discovery of the *malaise anglaise*, as well as the Friedmanesque prognoses of doom, are utterly misplaced, for the problems which beset Britain today have been evident for most of the twentieth century.

After World War II Britain was a nation beguiled by its own international legerdemain. It refused to join Europe following the assumption that, through the "special relationship," the British tail could wag the American dog. While continental Europe underwent a fundamental economic transformation, Britain lost markets to Japan and West Germany, and opted for technological status symbols that did nothing to renovate the country's economy. While the British H-bomb, the Comet, and the Skybolt—like the Concorde today—consumed most of the available investment capital, the new ports of Rotterdam and Hamburg turned London and Liverpool into backwaters.

Throughout the entire process, Britain remained, as it still is today, a country incapable of catharsis. Instead, to the stately cadences of the unwritten British constitution, the Queen, depending on whether the Conservative or Labor party had won the last election, has for twenty years read two alternating, but equally irrelevant, speeches from the throne.

"You never had it so good!" proclaimed Harold Macmillan and his Tories—which was like telling a man with a collection of credit cards and no job that he never had so much spending power.

"Socialism now!" cried the Labor party, whenever its turn came. But if Churchill, Eden, Macmillan, and Home, for all their talk of being Greeks in America's Roman Empire, never grasped the difference between international status and national substance, Attlee, Gaitskell, and Wilson were per-

petually unable to distinguish socialism from socialist rhetoric, to differentiate the formation of capital from its dissipation.

Successive British governments nationalized profitable industries and made them lose money, or nationalized unprofitable ones and forced them deeper into debt. While failing either to generate capital, or to discipline labor, Britain took it upon itself to provide all its citizens with the combined amenities of consumer capitalism and the socialist millennium: free housing, free medical treatment, free schooling through the university level. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Conservative and Labor party platforms made the same declarations, but in very different idioms: the British could continue to consume more while producing less. Britain could build itself up while living beyond its means; Britain's greatness could be restored by accelerating the processes that had destroyed it.

The test for both parties was the same, and the Conservative and Labor governments reacted identically. Both considered the value of the pound not as an economic cipher, but as a symbol of national greatness, and in this the British yet again proved themselves as economically foolish as they often have been politically astute. Britain's Dien Bien Phu was not Suez, as many suppose, but the long, disastrous, and utterly pointless struggle to keep the pound sterling at \$2.80. After World War II, the British recognized that India and Africa were no longer paths to greatness, only drains on the nation's resources, but they never could grasp the fiscal parallel—that declining competitiveness in international trade was accelerated by the billions of pounds at large in a postwar world in which British goods and services were less and less in demand. Had the pound been allowed to float downward, steadily and without fuss, the way the Empire was allowed to liquidate itself, Britain today might be a far different country. Instead, the loans—like Britain's international prestige after World War II—were simply squandered, Conservative and Labor governments alike.

Finally, in the early 1970s, all pretense was abandoned, and the downward float began. A year ago it was incredible that the pound might go as low as \$2. Today it stands at \$1.70, at



most having reached \$1.50, and the financial columnists speak of a great recovery. In fact, the financial observers continue to confuse the cure with the disease. The problem is not that the pound has such a low value. It is that the goods produced by the British economy are of such little worth.

Probably the worst thing that could happen to Britain now would be for the pound to rise suddenly back to a value of \$2 or higher. Neither Britain's working class nor its managerial class can be forced either to be more productive, or to settle for lower wages. A steadily depreciating pound can force the austerity which the government cannot. And while a cheap pound cannot improve the quality of British exports, it can keep them from being hopelessly overpriced. The corresponding expensiveness of imported goods also reduces domestic consumption far more effectively than import duties, especially now that Britain is a member of the Common Market. The real significance of the low value of the pound is that the British have at last abandoned an irrational struggle to keep the value of their currency isolated from the state of their economy. That does not mean that the hour of economic reason is at hand. But it does mean that at least one of the sources of the old fiscal irrationality is being phased out.

**T**HE PREDICTIONS, invariably made by Americans or continental Europeans, that Britain's economic ills must inevitably produce a dire political crisis tend to be interpreted from a similar perspective. Britain these days frequently is compared to Weimar Germany, or to the French Fourth Republic, or to Italy. But what all those countries possess—and America, through Watergate, showed it possesses, too—is a capacity, for good or ill, to attain and pass through major political crises. Britain today is Weimar—as the merest glance at the present state of British culture reveals—without Brecht, Weill or Dietrich or Einstein or the Bauhaus. Enoch Powell waits in the wings, but he is no Hitler, only a dotty classics professor with a knack for expressing well the worst of British prejudices. Nor can Britain be compared to Italy. It lacks both the threat and

promise of an Italian Communist party, which not only runs Bologna well, but offers itself as the sole force in Italian national life capable of imposing some measure of economic discipline. In Britain, the Labor-dominated local councils are as inefficient as those run by the Tories, and the extreme left is both as minuscule and incompetent as the extreme right. If the threat of a totalitarian Britain is negligible, so also are the possibilities of any "historical compromise." The essence of the British condition is not one of political menace, but the absence, on both sides, of any kind of force at all.

Least of all does Britain resemble the Fourth Republic. The revolving-door governments in Paris in the 1950s sustained a steady economic growth that made the later achievements of Gaullism possible. There is no British de Gaulle, of course, and events are working against Britain in another way that never afflicted France under the old regime. Then the Common Market helped protect French agriculture while

providing new markets for French industrial products. Today Britain's relatively efficient agricultural sector is mired in EEC regulations, but Britain's inefficient industries cannot compete with their continental rivals.

The Friedman scenario of British economic chaos producing political crisis is in fact less a vision of the future than simply another one of those possibilities already exhausted in the British past. It was only three years ago, in 1974, that former Prime Minister Edward Heath, faced with a miners' strike, attempted the Westminster version of a Friedmanesque coup. Heath evoked the Dunkirk spirit by putting Britain on an economically disastrous four-day week. Vowing to resist the miners' "economic blackmail," Heath then dissolved Parliament, and went to the country with the question "Who rules Britain?"

The answer rapidly became clear, as the votes were counted: Edward Heath no longer did. The significance of the failure of his ploy was not that it might

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## BRITAIN'S INEXHAUSTIBLE COMPLACENCE

have led to some kind of dictatorship, but that it demonstrated the political impossibility of imposing any kind of economic solution on Britain at all.

Since then, the Labor government—first under Harold Wilson, now under James Callaghan—has operated according to that central rule of Britain's unwritten constitution: don't rock the boat, especially when it is sinking lower and lower in the water. The workers have been jollied along into striking less. The City of London has been jollied along into accepting a floating—that is, a sinking—pound.

The result is an extraordinary one even for the British political system. The British government is bankrupt of economic solutions, but, in a way that would be impossible almost anywhere else, it has successfully generated political acceptance of the fact that there may be no economic solutions for Britain. Thus, declines in the value of the national currency that might traumatize western Germany, trade figures that might push Japan back into the age of Tojo, spending cuts that might bring on a general strike in France; all attract less attention among the British than the costume of a soccer star's last girlfriend, or the fate of 1,000 beagles. At no time was the characteristic British symbiosis of economic hopelessness and political stability better expressed than last year, when Sir Harold Wilson retired as prime minister, and James Callaghan smoothly took his place.

In 1964, when he first attained power, Wilson had promised Britain a "scientific revolution" of socialist equality and technological affluence. This time, Prime Minister Callaghan, in his first national address as prime minister, promised only what he could deliver—that is, virtually nothing at all.

"My job," he told the country, "will be to lead the people out of Egypt and into the desert. I doubt I shall live to see the Promised Land."

Britain's political stability and economic instability are manifestations of the same condition. They are opposite sides of the same devalued coin of exhausted national purpose and apparently inexhaustible British complacency. The French magazine *Le Point* neatly caught the popular British indifference to the economic bad news that so upsets the rest of the world. But the same description could have been written of a British worker after a day of tea

breaks beside a rickety assembly line, or of a civil servant leaving Whitehall after a tiresome afternoon of all those foreigners from the IMF asking why the Xerox copier won't work.

"John Smith," it reported, upon hearing the latest bad news,

*returns to his cottage, his pockets full of hyacinth bulbs purchased in a big store. He is relaxed. Calm. Happy to have a lawn to mow, a cat to stroke. The Welfare State protects him against life's mishaps. His unemployment benefit allows him to join a stamp collectors' association or one for model building. John Smith is quite convinced that England is eternal and her institutions are as robust as the Welsh rugby team.*

Not even *Time* magazine speaks of trendy London anymore. Not even Harold Wilson pretends the pound in one's pocket hasn't declined in value.

This is the new Britain of industrial unrest and questions in Parliament about the chronic shortage of toilet paper. The infernal devices of the Irish Republican Army shatter windows in the fashionable West End. In the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, the *Queen Elizabeth 2*, that masterpiece of New Elizabethan technology, drifts motionless, its newly designed boilers burnt out. London Bridge has been sold to real-estate speculators in Arizona.

But not all is darkness. The Concorde, government spokesmen confidently predict, will soon restore Britain's supremacy in the aerospace industry. The pound, they add, is so undervalued at \$1.70 that British goods are sure to flood the Common Market. We cut to a television screen, to a view of the Houses of Parliament illuminated against the night sky. The lights go out as striking workers take what in Britain euphemistically is called "industrial action." Big Ben begins to sound the hour—and breaks down.

But the BBC evening news muddles through. "This afternoon," a sonorous voice announces, "the mystery of the disappearance of the late Sir Peregrine Henniker-Heaton was solved. Sir Peregrine was discovered in his study by a charlady. He had been there since 1966."

The announcer explains that Sir Peregrine, pipe in hand, or what was left of it, was still attired in the same tweeds and old school tie he had been wearing the day he vanished. In answer to

a subsequent question in Parliament the responsible minister confirmed that from the outset the authorities of course had undertaken the most thorough investigation possible of this most baffling and intricate case. The country owed all its law-enforcement officials, as the rest of the members no doubt agreed, a great debt of gratitude, and it naturally was quite understandable that it had never occurred to the investigators concerned to open the unlocked door of Sir Peregrine's study and look for him there.

**T**HAT IS THE parable. But what is the meaning? In Oxford, my charlady tended to my study no more often than Sir Peregrine's apparently did to his. Is it all only an indirect commentary on the servant problem in today's Britain?

Or is there, as so often in Britain a macroeconomical meaning, too? For years Britain has been scouring the North Sea for oil rather in the manner it searched for Sir Peregrine. The economics of North Sea oil is based not merely on a continuing high price for energy, but on a continuously rising price for oil. For nearly a decade, as Britain has borrowed on future petro-pounds the way the sons of dukes once borrowed on their future inheritances the same claims have been made for North Sea oil that earlier were made for the Concorde, for the Skybolt missile, for the Comet, for entry into Europe, for the Special Relationship. Yet just as the first North Sea oil began to be piped ashore, Saudi Arabia broke with OPEC, and held oil prices down. Have the British, years after the search began, happened upon just another skeleton?

There may be a deeper meaning still, in the tale of Sir Peregrine and the unopened door. The whole fate of Britain today so often seems like some purloined letter of national purpose. What is missing seems clear to all except those who have lost it. It is easy enough for outsiders, too, to suggest where to look.

But for all the loans, headlines, and free advice, Britain continues to resemble a nation poking around a dusty and cluttered room, not quite sure where to look next, increasingly forgetful of what it is searching for.

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# HIRED SCAPEGOATS

In support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

by Samuel C. Florman

**I**N 1971 GEN. FRANK KOISCH, Director of Civil Works, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was invited to address a meeting of college newspaper editors in Washington. His announced topic was "Does the Corps Give a Dam?" A more immediate question was, Would the general be allowed to speak? From the moment Koisch strode into the hall, resplendent in military uniform, the audience of young journalists was in an uproar. For almost half an hour a battle raged between the program committee, pleading for silence, and a group of hostile activists, determined that this enemy of the people should not be heard. It was finally agreed that, no matter how repugnant his views, an invited guest should be permitted to speak. Order was restored, and General Koisch stated his case, which was that the corps did give a dam. There is no evidence that he convinced anybody present. As he spoke, a young woman circulated through the audience handing out "Dam the Corps—Not Our Rivers" bumper stickers. When the general had concluded his remarks it was discovered that his hat had been pilfered, and that someone had carved obscenities on his new leather briefcase.

The incident was an omen of things to come. The heroic image which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers enjoyed

in simpler times vanished in the aftermath of Vietnam and the environmental crisis. Its dam-building, dredging, draining, and other works, which once seemed so marvelous, are regarded increasingly with revulsion. Although never without its few vocal critics—from Harold L. Ickes, who complained that it was "above the law," to Justice William O. Douglas, who labeled it "public enemy number one"—the corps could not have been prepared for the virulent hostility directed against it during the 1970s. Books with such titles as *The River Killers* and *Dams and Other Disasters* chronicled the corps' alleged predations and called for its abolishment. Magazine articles—from "Dam Outrage" (*The Atlantic*, April 1970) to "Flooding America in Order to Save It" (*New Times*, November 1976)—characterized it as "a giant bulldozer out of control, burying villages, disfiguring the landscape." The media contributed to the swelling expression of public outrage. Even politicians, who used to treat the corps with deference, joined the attack. Stewart Udall has compared the corps to "a giant water-loving dinosaur with less brain per pound of flesh than any other vertebrate." Sen. William Proxmire awarded it his 1976 "Golden

*Samuel C. Florman is the author of The Existential Pleasures of Engineering.*

Fleece of the Year" for "the worst record for mismanagement and cost growth in the entire government."

**U**PON REFLECTION, there is nothing in the least surprising about this development. A more fitting villain for this nation in this decade could hardly be imagined. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers appears to embrace in one entity the three segments of American society which evoke our most intense protest: the military, the bureaucracy, and the environment-ravaging technocracy.

But appearances, as we continually say and repeatedly forget, can be deceptive. In the case of the Corps of Engineers, the publicly accepted image happens to be completely at variance with the facts. This does not move me to mount a defense on behalf of the corps, which has, after all, not suffered anything more cruel than a bad press. But I think the matter deserves examination because it exemplifies a combination of public misunderstanding and frenzy that seems to be a recurrent feature of our national behavior.

What are the facts about the Corps of Engineers, and how do they differ from the image?

That part of the corps which builds





dams, dredges harbors, and attends to other civil works—the Civil Works Directorate—is simply not, by any reasonable definition, a part of the military establishment. While technically a branch of the Army, this organization is, in reality, an agency of the United States government. The directorate's forty offices across the nation are manned by 32,000 civilian engineers, technicians, and other civil servants. A mere 300 Army officers nominally oversee the activities of this huge organization, and their involvement is circumscribed by the fact that their service in the directorate is limited to three-year tours of duty. More important, the power to authorize the study of a corps project, initiate it, and appropriate the money for it is held, not by any arm of the military, but by the Public Works Committees of the Congress and the Public Works Subcommittees of the Appropriations Committees. The Secretary of the Army rarely interferes in these matters. Even the Budget Bureau and the White House think twice before getting involved. The Corps of Engineers is an agency through which Congress studies, evaluates, and executes public works projects, particularly in the area of water resources development.

Why, then, the anachronism of keeping this institution as a branch of the Army? Why not establish it as a government agency known simply as the Department of Engineering, into which other federal engineering organizations could also be integrated, including the Bureau of Reclamation of the Department of the Interior, which provides irrigation facilities for the seventeen Western states. Someday it may come to pass. Common sense favors the idea; tradition, however, opposes it.

Engineering, for almost all of recorded history, was closely linked to the military. Fortifications and weapons were major engineering concerns. Transport and water supply came within the province of military planning. The term *civil engineer* did not even exist until the mid-eighteenth century, when it was coined by the famous English engineer John Smeaton, builder of the Eddystone lighthouse, in an attempt to differentiate his work from that of the military. The United States Military Academy at West Point was established in 1802 as an engineering school, and for several decades was the



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## HIRED SCAPEGOATS

main source of engineers for the nation. When Congress embarked on mapping the unexplored West, and developing harbors, canals, and other massive public works, it quite naturally got into the habit of delegating projects to the Army Corps of Engineers. A tradition so intertwined with the history of our land is not quickly cast aside. There are certain divisions of the corps which are essential elements of the Army: real estate, construction, and operation of military bases, plus a research and development arm. But the Civil Works Directorate, which is what invariably is meant when complaints are leveled against "the corps," has practically nothing to do with the military.

**W**HAT OF THE corps' reputation as an arrogant, unresponsive bureaucracy? Here again the facts belie the myth. The sine qua non for an unresponsive bureaucracy is an established, independent, and relatively invulnerable fiefdom. The Civil Works Directorate has nothing of the sort. Each and every year the Public Works Appropriation Act provides funds for the corps' civil-works program on a project-by-project basis. No other major federal agency has its work funded in this way. Critics of the corps say that the annual appropriation for each project serves to obscure the long-term cost of these projects. At the same time, however, it also makes corps activities supremely sensitive to every wish of the Congress. The appropriation of funds for the corps is, in fact, the major "pork-barrel" legislation of each Congressional session, and it reflects unerringly the mood and the shifting power relationships in the Senate and in the House. For the current fiscal year a \$2.5 billion appropriation is allocated to planning studies for 109 projects, construction work on 270 projects, and operation and maintenance of more than 700 installations. Projects are started, stopped, expedited, and delayed, and the action is parcelled out in each of the fifty states according to agreement arrived at in the labyrinths of the Capitol.

Doubtless some members of the corps have learned their way about in those labyrinths and have proved themselves adept at such bureaucratic

tricks as juggling cost-benefit ratios and rationalizing tremendous cost overruns. But it is clear that they have no real power, being dependent, at twelve-month intervals, on Congressional whim. Far from being an intransigent bureaucracy, the corps appears to have evolved as an instrument exquisitely tuned to work the will of the people.

All right, critics of the corps might concede, but which people? Corps projects traditionally come into being when some local citizens' group gains the political support of a Congressman and the technical approval of the local corps district engineer. Typically, the local group is a Chamber of Commerce or some other representative of monied interests. Yet even if many projects are conceived in greed, and sponsored under slightly unsavory circumstances, the entire local community soon benefits from increased employment and a prospering business climate. Critics who would have us think that corps projects benefit only a select few ignore this fact. Some studies have sought to demonstrate that other types of federal programs would be more effective in aiding local communities, and well they may be. But pending the evolution of such programs, the Corps of Engineers serves as a conduit for Congressional revenue-sharing. The gains of sponsoring entrepreneurs, ill-gotten as they may be, are not, in the long run, a major consideration. A. Den Doolard, a Dutch author, has written of the contractors who work on building the dikes in Holland: "Profit is merely the bait that destiny has offered to these calculators."

The destiny of America, as perceived until recently by the vast majority of its people, has been to grow economically and to develop its water resources to this end. Wilderness areas have been flooded, rural families uprooted, archaeological sites inundated, and important caves damaged, not because these were objectives of the Corps of Engineers, but because commercial development was mandated by the citizenry. As the values of people change, and as Congress reflects such change, the activities of the corps will change automatically. Indeed, changes are occurring at this time. Two college professors, writing in *Public Administration Review*, claim that such changes demonstrate how aging, entrenched bureaucracies are capable of innovative

and progressive response to new conditions. But this misses the point about the corps, which is that, because of the unique year-by-year, project-by-project funding of its activities, it is not a comfortable, unresponsive bureaucracy.

If the corps is neither a true branch of the military nor an entrenched bureaucracy, does it not at least stand condemned for its technocratic destruction of the environment? The issue is complex, but again the corps must be found not guilty. When we think in terms of realistic alternatives, we must question the seriousness of some of the alleged crimes.

If, by doing away with our inland waterway system, we could have back our wild rivers, how would we then transport the one-sixth of all intercity cargo which is presently waterborne? By trucks and railroads, of course. Comparing barges moving slowly upstream with roaring trailer trucks and freight trains, I, for one, cannot see where this would be much of an environmental improvement. The corps has been accused of being in cahoots with the barge industry; this may be true, but since such complaints usually come from railroad and trucking lobbyists, they do not excite the environmentalist in me.

More complicated than transport is the issue of water supply. For the past several years we have been blessed with adequate rain and snow, so that those people who have been excoriating the builders of dams and reservoirs have not had to worry about drought. But this spring a water shortage has occurred in the Western states, and we are again haunted by visions of failed crops and incipient dust bowls. Water shortages are "natural" phenomena, suppose, but some modification of the environment in an effort to avert such disasters seems to me to be morally justified, even in a society sensitized to ecological concerns.

On the other hand, in the area of flood control, things have been done which are difficult to defend. By damming and leveeing, and permitting commercial and residential development of the flood plains, the corps has restricted rivers to artificial channels, where they flow more swiftly and become potentially more dangerous than they ever were. Now, belatedly, the corps is stressing "nonstructural" methods of flood control. It is only proper that



be held accountable for its past errors in this field. But, in a nation where people persist in living on cliffs which are crumbling into the sea, and build houses atop major earthquake faults, the rush onto low-lying flood plains might not have been easy to prevent.

**P**ERHAPS THE MOST serious problems caused by the corps result from its indiscriminate filling, dredging, and draining of our wetlands. But it is hard to place the blame for these acts entirely, or even mainly, on corps personnel. Until recently the importance of wetlands in the ecological scheme of things was not understood. Estuaries and swamps, we have only lately learned, moderate our climate, provide natural pollution control, and play a vital role in the life cycle of a multitude of marine organisms and other animal life. If these facts were not sufficiently known to biologists, meteorologists, agronomists, and other environmental specialists in our society, why do we expect the corps' civil engineers to have been uniquely prescient? Considering the general lack of knowledge in these matters, was it such an inexcusable manifestation of hubris for the corps to have tinkered with nature? Hardly, unless we condemn all mankind for its hope, dating from earliest times, of draining malarial swamps, and "reclaiming" what appeared to be fetid, disgusting marshland. Goethe's Faust, remember, found his final salvation in a land-reclamation project.

In light of the new scientific knowledge, Congress in 1972 gave the corps responsibility for protecting all the wetlands in the nation. When the corps defined its responsibility as limited to its traditional province, the *navigable* waters, environmental groups brought suit to establish the corps' authority over *all* waters. In a situation not without irony, the courts have agreed with the environmentalists that the corps should take total control. How this will work out in the long run is not yet certain, but it is clear that the corps is taking its new responsibility seriously. Last year it stopped the Deltona Corporation of Florida from turning 2,000 acres of mangrove swamp into a housing development, even though Deltona had already sold the land to prospective home-builders. Commercial devel-

opers all over the nation were aghast. "The decision was a shock," said Frank Mackle, president of Deltona. "I still can't get over it. The corps—they've been like us. They're engineers, our kind of people."

Obviously, Mr. Mackle, like a lot of people in this country, has no understanding of what engineering is all about. The profession is dedicated to performing works "for the general benefit of mankind," or "for the good of humanity," to quote from two definitions of long standing. But this does not mean that engineers take unto themselves the right to define what such benefit or good might be, or, even less, that they are committed to Mr. Mackle's ideas on the subject. Society establishes its own goals, and engineers, like jurists, educators, politicians, and the rest of the body social, work toward achieving those goals. When the nation wanted to fill in its wetlands and tame its rivers for the sake of commerce, the engineer did the job. If the nation has become more sensitive to environmental considerations, then so, by definition, has the engineer. Engineering is not antienvironment. Environmentalism itself is a branch of engineering. Engineers are not automatons without conscience or conviction; they are philosophically an integral part of the community. They are action-oriented, to be sure, but they are no more devoted to dams than they are to transistors or solar panels. Some foot-dragging is inevitable among those long associated with particular undertakings. But the brightest, most alert, and most ambitious members of the corps will see to it that the times do not pass them by. Careers are not made by defying the will of the electorate.

Some of the corps' new ecological awareness will be discounted as cynical lip service. When the chief of engineers jovially passes out big buttons saying "The Corps Cares," this proves only that a public-relations department is at work. But wanting a reputation for caring can clearly be considered a step in the right direction.

The corps is currently proceeding with deauthorization of more than 400 projects; at the same time it is moving ahead with some projects to which there is much public opposition. Even after new standards of caution and sensitivity are applied, there remain areas of disagreement which are essen-

tially a matter of taste. What sort of a landscape do we want? What mix of wilderness and factories, parks and highways, suburbs and cities *will do*? It is said that there is no disputing taste, but in fact there is nothing more important to dispute. John Dewey put it this way:

*The formation of a cultivated and effectively operative good judgment or taste with respect to what is esthetically admirable, intellectually acceptable and morally approvable is the supreme task set to human beings by the incidents of experience.*

This is the challenge which we must recognize and accept. We cannot avoid it by pretending that our fate is in the hands of organizations such as the Corps of Engineers.

There is no way in which we can recapture the wild continent that once was. To regret this is, I believe, an elitist conceit. But we can stop any new project at any time. All we have to do is convince ourselves, and then our Congress, that this is what we want to do. (The Carter Administration has selected fifty-nine water-resource development projects as "high-priority projects for re-evaluation" and has already recommended a halt to nineteen of them.)

The responsiveness of the corps to the mood of the nation should make us confident that we are still in control of our own destiny. It also tells us something about the hostility which has been directed toward the corps for the past several years. We say that we oppose the corps for being militaristic, bureaucratic, and antienvironmental, but upon inspection these reasons are seen to be invalid or feeble. We actually oppose the corps because it so unerringly shows us what we are—or what we just were. We learn something new, and feel guilty that we did not know it always.

The concept of scapegoat has descended to us from biblical myth. Perhaps, like so many mysterious phenomena of mass psychology, a combination of confused and misdirected blame is, in some way that we cannot see, a vital element in maintaining social stability. This must be the hope of those who wish not to be overly discouraged by recent public behavior toward the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



## MORE HEAT THAN LIGHT

The improbability of a coherent energy policy

by John Midgley

**R**EMEDIES OFTEN INSPIRE more fear than ailments do, and so it is in energy policy, a branch of government in which the bedside manner is much prized and much studied. "We can still have suburban homes and still have cars," the new Federal Energy Administrator, Mr. John O'Leary, told us on a talk show in the depth of the winter freeze. The homes would be a bit cooler in winter and warmer in summer, the cars would not be quite so big, the thermal units would cost more on the monthly bill. But "radical revisions in the way we conduct our lives"? No, no.

Asked a little later in the program how long it might take to bring just one of the country's energy problems under control, Mr. O'Leary mentioned "a time frame such as the next ten years." That particular problem was the one that has most troubled most people this year, the imbalance between supply of and demand for natural gas. As a matter within domestic control and a pure product of administrative folly, its "time frame" might be expected to be among the shortest. Perhaps, at ten years, it is.

My choice of the term *administrative folly* does not imply any personal reflection on the five Federal Commissioners or their staff of 1,400 worthy men and women, now threatened with early retirement or absorption into the new Department of Energy. To blame

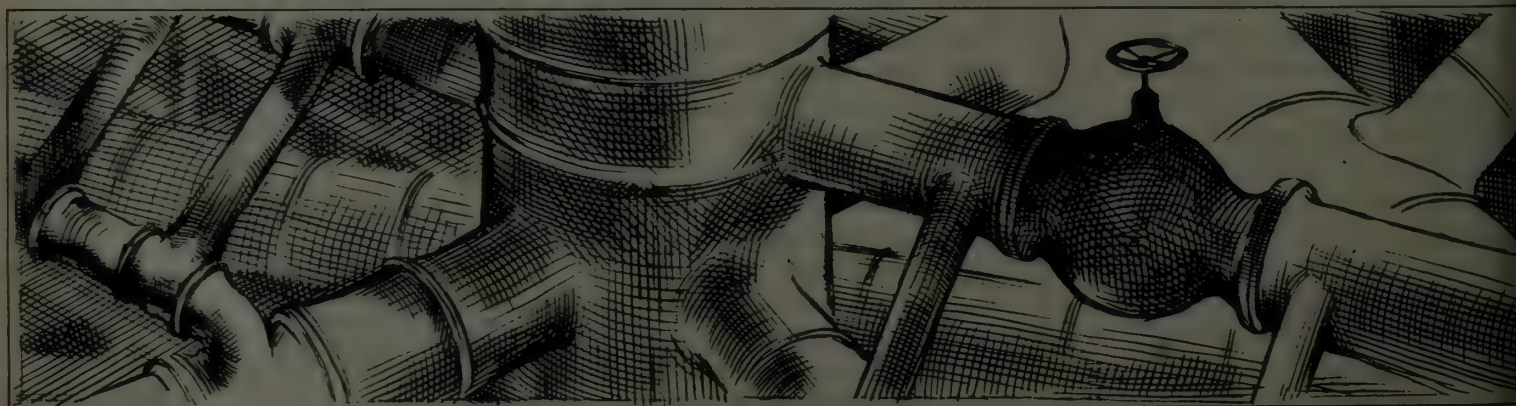
the agency or its founders, the framers of various acts of Congress between 1920 and 1938, for what has gone wrong since their day would be rather like blaming Frederick the Great for the loss of the battle of Jena twenty years' after his death (as some nineteenth-century historians did). Frederick's military system was not able to stand up to Napoleon, sure enough, but then it was never designed for that. The blame lay with those after him who failed to adapt to the changes that were going on before their eyes.

**F**EDERAL REGULATION of the kind that now burdens the Federal Power Commission was born with the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, which imposed restraints on the great new railroads in their dealings with the producers and consumers, especially those in the West, who were otherwise at the railroads' mercy. When the federal government had to regulate oil pipelines the Interstate Commerce Commission got the job, but when the same need came up for interstate natural-gas lines the job was given to the relatively young watchdog on interstate electric power transactions, the Federal Power Commission. The same legislative principles, owing something to the Granger Move-

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ment and something to the railway legislation enacted in Victorian England were handed on. Essentially the FPC was to regulate the transportation and wholesale distribution of what was then for all practical purposes, an inexhaustible resource. It was a safeguard against bad service and price-gouging just as the railroad laws were.

To this day it works on basically the same "cost-of-service" principle, but natural gas is no longer (for the most part) something that arises spontaneously when an oil field is developed; it has to be looked for and produced for itself to satisfy the clamor of a market. The system of price regulation established in the 1930s prevents the clamor of the market ringing in the ears of the potential producers. It also protects consumers from paying for gas what they would have to pay for the same heat obtained from oil or coal or electric power, or from paying anything like what the gas is worth to the nation's economy. We are caught in a dilemma. It is a dilemma that we might escape if we could think of gas exploration as a cheerful gamble, akin to putting on *Hello, Dolly!* on Broadway and sitting back to see whether you lose your shirt or made a fortune; but most of us cannot. Most of us resent the oil and gas industry, we think it morally wrong to let it collect yet another jackpot, we think it socially evil that the bland, peaceful habits of the innocent





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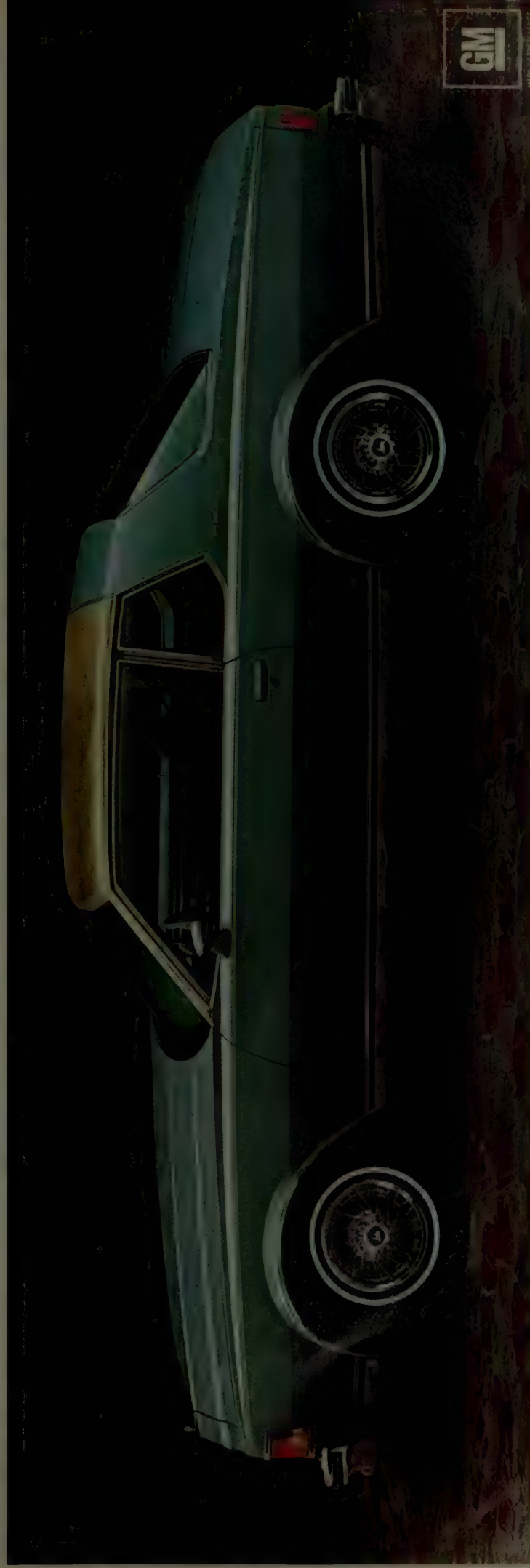
And here it is. With its very own elk-grain vinyl landau top, four very believable wire wheel covers, a pair of sport mirrors, accent striping, distinctive Landau nameplates, and a personality all its own.

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householder should bring him, as they are starting to bring him, heavier monthly bills than he can afford.

This is the established public attitude, to which President Jimmy Carter and Congress, not to mention future Presidents and Congresses that will inherit the problems they leave unsolved, have to pay some respect; but where does it lead? Listen again to Mr. O'Leary on the occasion already mentioned:

*We want to find some means...to keep gas inexpensive or relatively less expensive to the householder who is already on it, who has the furnace and what-have-you, and find a way to get a perceived price up to this industrial user who can switch.*

That is nice; but doesn't it create a kind of privilege? What happens when you sell the house? The cheap gas franchise goes with it, which should add a little to the price you get. Your neighbor thought gas might become scarce, so he stayed with his oil furnace; so much the worse for him. He is lucky if his workplace does not close down in winter when its gas is shut off to safeguard supplies to your house. Making industrial firms switch to other fuels is indeed necessary, but it also has consequences. The firm's fuel bill goes up because other fuels are dearer; it has to spend money on pollution control because other fuels are dirtier; the costs will be paid by the copsumers of its products, those who have gas furnaces in their homes and also those who have not.

What stands out is the absence of any set of arrangements made by government to bring about a rough correspondence between the public interest and the diversity of private interests. If an oil or gas company brings its gas to market as things stand now it must expect to be penalized by having its price frozen, and if a general deregulation were to come (which it will not, for a long time), it would have to expect an excess-profits tax. If it waits, it will eventually get a better price and escape the tax (still hypothetical, but talked of in the Administration and in Congress) as well. Somehow we have created a situation in which conformity to the public interest is financially reckless. Even a socialist system would have a hard time making that work; but a free-enterprise system?

THE PROBLEM is easily recognized but not so easily put right, as President Carter has been finding. Thinking about it loosely before he came to office he had no difficulty in knowing what his preferences were. He is a free-enterprise man, fairly conservative in economics, he believes in the price mechanism and the markets, and his puritanism makes sumptuary self-denial congenial to him. His campaign promise to deregulate new natural gas had no strings on it, though it has started to have some lately; true, it helped him to carry Texas and Louisiana and so to get elected, but it was genuine as an expression of what he would like to do. Left to himself, he would like to deregulate oil prices, too. Nor would that be, in itself, an unreasonable act; an arrangement such as we have at present, which forces domestic crude-oil production to subsidize imports to the tune of \$3 a barrel, is not exactly suitable for a country that claims to be trying to encourage domestic production and cut down on imports. But he is also opposed to inflation, and his economists have been warning him of the fearful impact that a sudden deregulation of oil and gas prices would have. Mr. Carter has to go carefully.

Those well-publicized consultations at Plains before the inauguration about stimulating the economy should have been about oil, gas, coal, and nuclear power instead. Mr. Carter arrived for his inauguration with an intention formed to gather the dispersed agencies and bureaus into a new Department of Energy, and with his choice made of who was to head it; that was about all he had got settled in his mind.

The secretary-to-be was, of course, Mr. James Schlesinger, and January found Mr. Schlesinger in the White House as chief energy man, coordinating measures of defense against the great freeze. Because of his experience in the Rand Corporation, the Atomic Energy Commission, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Pentagon, he is mostly thought of as an all-purpose technocrat, which he is in a way; but he is also a Harvard economist and an incurable teacher. In the intervals of deciding how to get some gas to West Virginia or Pennsylvania, he was ordering his thoughts about the future. This included rereading the writings of an Oxford economist, Sir Hubert Henderson,

on the dilemma of British economic policy after the second world war, some of which Schlesinger had photocopied to hand out to people seeking enlightenment.

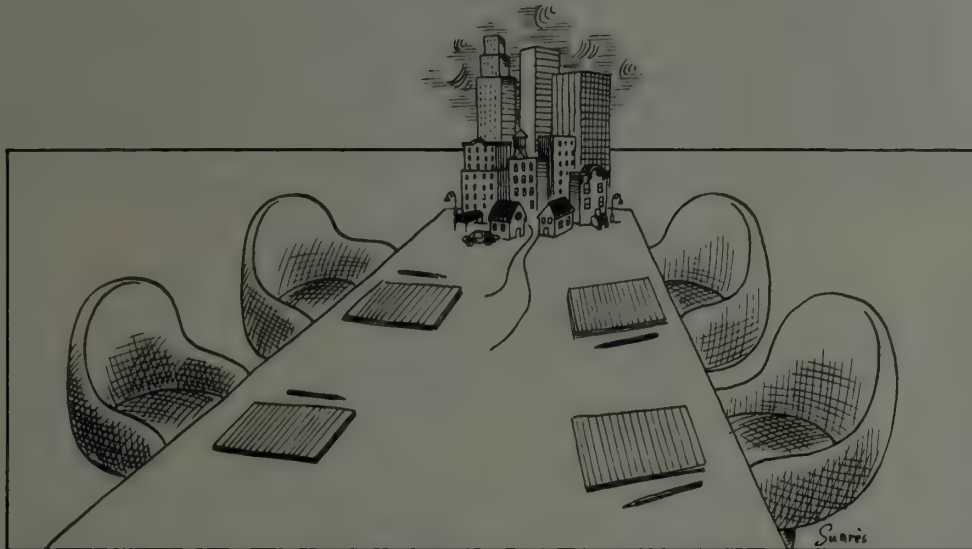
Henderson was talking about a ravaged economy in which the difficulty of bringing aggregate demand and aggregate supply into line was enormous, no lesson for Americans there. Narrowed down to apply just to the energy economy of the United States, the analogy ceases to be farfetched. Demand for natural gas 50 percent in excess of supply. Domestic oil production falling while demand rises. Coal, the inevitable substitute, blocked by technological deficiencies, geographical problems (lack of water in the West), and environmental hazards, most of which apply to nuclear energy as well. Oil imports filling the gap, just reaching half the total level of oil consumption and on their way up. No teacher can ask for a worse object lesson than that.

Henderson's argument was that an unregulated price system was "a fair-weather system," useful when demand and supply were not far out of balance and only small price adjustments were wanted. He was arguing against both the socialists who wanted government controls for ever and the free-market zealots who maintained that the economy would be liberated and healed if only the government would take the lid off. More likely, he thought, it would go temporarily crazy. President Carter has been hearing the same thing about the natural-gas market. If he came to office without a program, he came with distinct attitudes; he knows what he wants, but to bring it about he has to choose between courses that reach rather far into the society and are all, in different ways, equally unpleasant. For a political leader it is too serious a matter to be left entirely to the technocrats.

From being a set of rules to see fair play between the oligopoly and the consumer, energy policy has become a form of crisis management. That will not do for much longer, and a new mission has to be worked out: to manage the return to normality, and to provide for the future. That is a permanent job and affects so much in the national life that the new Department of Energy may turn out to be the most powerful agency of the executive branch.



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# THE SPECIOUS MORALITY OF THE LAW

resisting the call for new faith in an old gospel

by Sanford Levinson

*Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar? And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obey'd in office.*  
—King Lear

THE "RULE OF LAW" is a notion we can neither live without nor analyze satisfactorily in modern terms. It has become widely accepted that the root meaning of Watergate involved the very maintenance of rule of law under the Constitution. Rep. Barbara Jordan articulated this sentiment as she prepared to cast her vote in the House Judiciary Committee for the impeachment of Richard Nixon: "My faith in the Constitution is whole, it is complete, it is total, and I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction of the Constitution."

What is eloquent is not always true or even intellectually comprehensible. Representative Jordan's statement is an example of assertion substituting for careful thought. The entire notion of rule of law upon which it rests falls to pieces as soon as subjected to close review. Jordan, Anthony Lewis, former Sen. Sam Ervin, Archibald Cox, and Eugene Rostow have appealed to the notion of fidelity to law as a standard around which to rally. Jonathan Schell, in *The Time of Illusion*, one of the better attempts to analyze the institutional meaning of the Nixon Administration, focuses

on the Administration's ignorance "of the spirit of the law in general and of the substance of American law in particular." The Administration is ultimately accused of intolerance toward the "imperatives of the Constitutional system." Theodore White titled his own tale of disillusionment about Nixon *Breach of Faith*. This entire strand of sentiment and analysis is nothing less than an effort to shore up important aspects of America's civil religion, one of whose premises is that Presidents and other leaders have a covenant (which they by and large respect) with the American people to remain within the boundaries of the legal order. White's Nixon is therefore the priest who turns out to be conducting a Black Mass. At the very instant that White denounces the apostate, he reaffirms his essential faith in the underlying creed. President Carter himself illustrated this tendency to look to the past as a guide to our future in his Inaugural Address, when he called for "fresh faith in the old dream" of America. However much it is conceded that present-day America has done wrong—and one of the remarkable passages of that address was his implicit concession that it was reasonable for decent Americans in the recent past to "despise our own government"—there is no concession that we might be adrift in an uncharted sea. Instead, all these persons would agree with the late Prof. Alexander Bickel of Yale that "we find

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our visions of good and evil in the experience of the past, in our tradition, in the secular religion of the American republic." Passage to the harbor thus lies in the use of navigation charts already provided by our past.

All of these calls for renewed faith, and the rush to embrace the rule of law as an answer to the problems of modern governance, reveal what can only be described as an intellectual failure of nerve, where ritualistic incantation is substituted for the painful process of rigorous examination. It is widely assumed that there is some identifiable, almost timeless, essence to "the Constitution" and that the rule of law necessarily implies adherence to decency. Both of these propositions are wrong. As Barbara Jordan well knows, at one time the Constitution tolerated—indeed, protected—slavery, and she presumably would not have thought *that* Constitution worthy of veneration. Although the Constitution is better now—in part because of a fratricidal war costing some 600,000 lives—it is not yet so much better that reservations should not remain before we rush to answer the call to be born again into America's constitutional faith.

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Unanswered questions

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**I**N ORDER FOR US to see the logic and desirability of the rule of law, such questions as the following must be resolved:

Are the law and Constitution necessarily linked to enduring moral norms? Is there any reason to believe that fidelity to the Constitution would serve to prevent vast political evil?

Can we accept a definition of "the law" as anything other than that which is declared by the Supreme Court or other, allegedly authoritative, institutions? Can we affirm, for example, the legitimacy of "taking the law into our own hands" upon recognizing that established officials are unwilling to follow "the law"?

Finally, can one speak of an enduring, timeless Constitution and, therefore, of its violation? If the Constitution has in fact changed radically over time, can we speak of its "subversion"? Ultimately, can we even make sense of our own past, including the American Revolution, through the casual invocation of the notion of the "rule of law"?

All faiths rest on assumptions, of course, including belief in the possibility and benevolence of the rule of law. The reaffirmation of faith in the rule of law is certainly understandable, for it provided an ostensibly apolitical rationale for driving from office a scoundrel who richly deserved his fate. Nonetheless, we cannot endorse the faith unless we can answer

yes to every question raised above. Such a response, however, flies in the face of basic contemporary intellectual premises.

When John Adams defined a republic as "a government of laws, and not of men," he was invoking an understanding of law and social life that is now almost wholly alien to our own. Unless we ourselves accept Adams's vision, however, our latter-day reaffirmation of his faith is akin to the "speaker" of a foreign language who can mouth the sounds but is wholly uncomprehending of their meaning.

For Adams and most other pre-nineteenth-century adherents of the rule of law, law was not only timeless, but, more important, linked with moral norms. This notion, of course, has an ancient lineage, going back at least to Aristotle. Even today the front pediment of Langdell Hall at the Harvard Law School features the statement of the medieval jurist Henry de Bracton "Not Under Man, But Under God and the Law." The point, though, is that God and the law are linked, for law was defined by the medievalists as the product either of natural reason given by God or of immemorial custom itself incarnating natural justice, or as the commands of political leaders ordained by God and therefore given the right to rule.

Adams's notion of the rule of law was based on this older conception of law as rooted in a common religious and moral order. Moreover, Adams viewed individuals as members of political communities to which they would be willing to subordinate their selfish personal interest in behalf of a "common good." Like many of his contemporaries, he blended, however precariously, belief in individual rights and liberties with the equally strong belief in an overarching community. Subordination to law was thus subordination only to that part of ourselves willing to recognize primary obligation to the community, a community in turn recognizing obligations to adhere to fixed moral principles.

These ideas have barely survived. We pride ourselves today on moral pluralism, on the lack of any common religious or moral order. Indeed, we are offended when the Catholic church suggests that the state has any moral responsibilities at all in regard to such issues as abortion, so far have we come from the earlier vision of a community sharing a common moral vision. Whatever rhetoric might be heard about the duty of others to adhere to the common good, most of us certainly believe that our primary duties are to ourselves and our families. Liberty has come to focus on freedom *from* the community or the state rather than realization of a common vision *through* the community and its institutions.



**F**OR ADAMS AND the older generations, law was based on moral principle. Ironically, the American Revolution itself, made in the name of the "fundamental law" that allegedly had been breached by the British, hastened the demise of the older notion, for its success presaged a future in which popular sovereignty, rooted in will rather than in a common moral order, was to become the motif of the new American polity. Thomas Jefferson believed that it "was the will of the nation which makes the law obligatory." No longer need law be based on moral principle; instead it receives its legitimacy from incarnating the focused energies of the body politic.

This transition from principle to will has the effect of separating law from morality; any guarantee that fidelity to law necessarily will mean equal fidelity to principles of moral conduct vanishes. Even in 1787, at the time of the Constitutional Convention, there were those who recognized the implication of the new emphasis on popular sovereignty. James Wilson of Pennsylvania, second only to Madison in importance at the convention, noted that the constitution, which he supported, would nevertheless allow laws that "may be unjust, may be unwise, may be dangerous, may be destructive; and yet not be so unconstitutional as to justify the judges in refusing to give them effect." Wilson pointed toward what was to become the dominant view of law for future generations (and certainly the view emphasized today at most major law schools). Law stripped of any moral anchoring, becoming instead the product of specific political institutions enjoying power under the Constitution.

Political institutions thus become the forum for the triumph of the will, expressed as positive law, and it is the duty of the legal official to implement the public will. The radical nature of this shift in notions of law is made most clear in the thought of Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of the most influential shapers of modern American consciousness, and in the later writings of his most notable disciple, Justice Felix Frankfurter. Both defined the task of courts in a democracy as giving almost unrestrained enforcement to popular will as measured by legislative prowess.

For Holmes, government was a reflection of power, and nothing more. The "excellence" of a given government was measured by its "correspondence to the actual equilibrium of force in the community—that is, conformity to the wishes of the dominant power." The only moral content of the law lies in the extent to which law reflects the moral notions of the dominant group, but these notions obviously

**"It is widely assumed that there is some identifiable, almost timeless, essence to 'the Constitution' and that the rule of law necessarily implies adherence to decency. Both of these propositions are wrong."**



Zevl. Blum



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need not be shared by those who are dominated.

Holmes is saved from any concern about the implications of his view by his acceptance of one of the most optimistic tenets of his boyhood mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson. History for both of these men was a story with a happy ending, no matter how much difficulty its characters might encounter on the way. During the Civil War, after being wounded and believing his life to be in danger, Holmes wrote, "Now as ever I believe that whatever shall happen is best." Almost sixty years later he admitted, "I do in a sense worship the inevitable." There is here an abject capitulation of moral sensibility before the brute force of history.

Holmes regarded the problem of coming to terms with the existence of moral evil in the world as "drool," and he had only contempt for those who took the problem seriously. The role of the judge was that of the good bureaucrat—the enforcement, without question, of orders given by superiors: "I strongly believe that my agreement or disagreement has nothing to do with the right of the majority to embody their opinions in law. . . . [States] may regulate life in ways which we as legislators might think as injudicious or if you like as tyrannical." One might, in a sense, admire Holmes for his candor, for there is no attempt to hide the fact that the rule of law might be equivalent to tyranny, but it is at this point that we are entitled to ask why law should deserve our respect, why faith in the Constitution should be affirmed rather than questioned.

Justice Frankfurter, a self-professed disciple of Holmes and the most influential figure in American constitutional thought in the past half-century, also provides surprisingly little reason to respect the rule of law. Echoing James Wilson, he says, "Much that should be rejected as illiberal, because repressive and envenoming, may well not be unconstitutional." And he summarizes his vision of the role of courts by stating that "our duty to abstain from confounding policy with constitutionality demands perceptive humility as well as self-restraint in not declaring unconstitutional what, in a judge's private judgment, is deemed unwise and even dangerous." This last remark is drawn from a conceptual universe wholly different from that of Bracton or even John Adams, for the possibility of universal recognition of what constitutes common morality and the common good, and therefore law, has been replaced by a sharp split between "private" judgment and public notions. Each of us is perceived as an isolated being pursuing mutually exclusive, endlessly conflicting, per-

sonal visions. Law is the outcome of a bargaining process among such beings, but it is altogether possible that such outcomes will include "repressive, envenoming," "unwise and even dangerous" laws. The substantive content that underlay Bracton's and Adams's concept of law has vanished, and the notion of law has decayed into pure proceduralism—the recognition of public will as mediated by the institutions authorized by the Constitution to pass laws.\* Without seeking to denigrate the importance of procedures, which we might well cherish and defend as necessary to any proper notion of a decent political order, one can nonetheless point to dangers in viewing them as sufficient to evoke the reverence claimed for them.

### Conflicts of interest

**M**AJORITY RULE is simply not the same thing as the rule of law as it was classically defined. Alexis de Tocqueville had noted in his otherwise admiring remarks about lawyers that if they "prize freedom much, they generally value legality still more: they are less afraid of tyranny than of arbitrary power; and, provided the legislature undertakes of itself to deprive men of their independence, they are not dissatisfied."

So long as law is identified with will, even majority will, then any argument for the moral integrity of law must identify what it is about certain wills and their manifestation that makes them worthy of respect. Holmes himself made

\* One example of the modern discomfort created by even the suggestion that political leaders are subordinate to general conceptions of public morality and the common good is provided by ten Republican members of the House Judiciary Committee commenting on the passage of an article of impeachment based on Mr. Nixon's abuse of power. They argued that there was no specific law prohibiting "abuse of power." And they argued that impeachment ought to be based only on violation of such specific laws. "If the Congress may remove an elected President for conduct which is violative of no known law, but is *merely* in its view 'improper,' and if the Congress refuses to consider what has been thought 'proper' or 'improper' in the past, but will address only the question of what now seems 'improper' in the *subjective view of a temporary majority* of legislators, we will have traded in the Constitution for new Articles of Confederation" (emphasis added). What is curious about this argument is that the Republican legislators disdain the majority view about the moral requirements of leadership in the name of adherence to "known law," but one wonders what the legitimacy of any such law rests on other than equally "temporary majorities" and "subjective judgments" of earlier legislatures.



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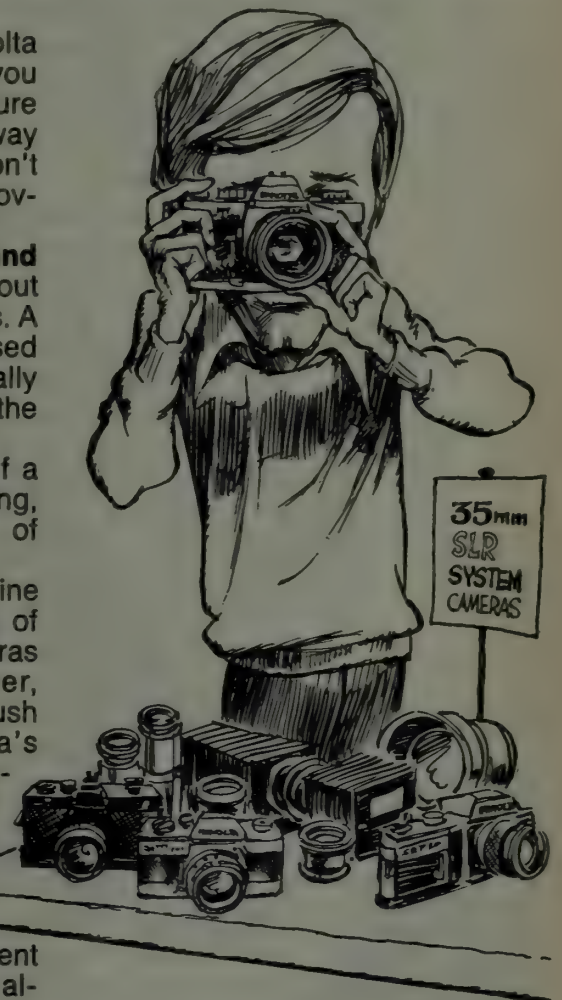
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no effort to engage in such an argument, and Frankfurter spent most of his energies denying that constitutionality and wisdom, or even decency, were necessarily joined together.

The followers of Holmes and Frankfurter hoped that Alexander Bickel would provide a resolution of the tensions within their views. A graduate of the Harvard Law School, a clerk to Justice Frankfurter, and for twenty years one of the leading members of the faculty at the Yale Law School, Bickel was seen by some as uniquely equipped to construct a coherent vision of the law. Although his life was tragically cut short, he did write, in *The Morality of Consent*, the outline of his argument, which is worth examining carefully.

Bickel quotes Holmes's own comment that the Constitution "is made for people of fundamentally differing views." At the same time, though, Bickel also quotes Edmund Burke for the view that social life demands some "uniform rule and scheme of life," some "principles, however provisionally and skeptically held." For Bickel these principles are, in some way, provided by history. Like Schell and Lewis (the latter has lavishly praised *The Morality of Consent*), Bickel seems to assume, without strong argument, that there is a relatively unequivocal American tradition that can be identified and adhered to by persons of goodwill.

Even if this is the case, one wonders what meaning can be given to the earlier assertion of the existence of "fundamentally differing views." Holmes, too, had suggested the same contradiction when he referred at one point to the existence of "fundamental principles as they have been understood by the traditions of our people and our law," but he characteristically made no effort at all to indicate what these principles might be or how they were to be discovered. There is a shell-game quality about this aspect of Holmes's and Bickel's arguments, for "fundamental differences" turn out not to be so fundamental after all if they are encapsulated within social uniformity.

But Holmes and Bickel were right the first time: the practical crisis of a legal order comes when fundamentally different values are asserted within the political realm, so that one person's notion of justice is perceived as manifest tyranny by someone else. It is easy enough to draw examples from both past and contemporary America. The lack of common interest between master and slave is obvious. So is the relationship between the military during World War II and the Japanese-Americans who were herded into internment camps in an order whose constitutionality was upheld by the Supreme Court. Latter-day disputes con-

cerning the legitimate role of race in governmental decision-making, whether for purposes of segregation or affirmative action, or the legitimacy of the state's allowing the cessation of the possibility of life, by abortion or euthanasia, also present differences of the greatest magnitude regarding conceptions of justice.

At this point, however, all Bickel can do is offer a highly conservative injunction: "Our legal order cannot endure too rapid a pace of change in moral conceptions, and its fundamental premise is that its own stability is itself a high moral value, in most circumstances the highest. . . . If the pace is forced, there can be no law." As a legal sociologist, Bickel is almost certainly correct, but this argument fails to establish a reason for those who feel tyrannized by the existing legal order to recognize it as legitimate. Even if they share the regard for stability, which is certainly important, they might well not regard it as of such fundamental importance as to override any contrary values. There are surely cases, as Bickel himself recognizes, in which one might prefer "no law" to the maintenance of an existing iniquitous legal order, as in the case of Nazi Germany, or, perhaps, South Africa, or the Soviet Union. And even if one endorses Bickel's prescription to go slowly, there would presumably be no moral bar to seizing power if there were no practical one as well.\*

There is no doubting Bickel's moral seriousness; his is not the complacent world of Holmes. But one doubts whether Bickel can resolve the problem he sets forth by asserting, on the one hand, a thoroughgoing moral skepticism, and announcing, on the other, that "we can as a society and a culture discover some boundaries" to the meaning of the moral realm. Our maintenance as a society might well depend on the social reality of such common boundaries, but this begs recognition of the very social situation that brings forth most political and legal theory—the perception that social life as we know it is being challenged and may even be dissolving.

The family of John Adams itself observed the passage of Massachusetts from a relatively homogeneous society to a nineteenth-century conglomeration drawn from a variety of backgrounds. In 1780 Massachusetts was still able to style itself as a commonwealth, and its Constitution, written in large measure by

\* Seizure of power, of course, is only one alternative. Given Bickel's emphasis on the importance of common consent to norms of law, it is unclear how he can disapprove of the secession of the dissident Southern states in 1860-61. A condemnation of these slaveholding states founders when one considers that the Constitution itself—the presumed object of veneration—protected slavery.



John Adams, explicitly referred to the duty of the state to inculcate a common morality among the citizenry. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the notion of common association lay in ruins in a new America dedicated to the pursuit of private wealth. Vanderbilt's "the public be damned" was perhaps tactless, but it summarized the ethics not only of his class of robber barons but, more important, of the entire social order being molded by market-oriented capitalists.

Indeed, one reason for the increasing emphasis on "reverence for law" from the nineteenth century to the present day has been the realization that there is no other basis for uniting a nation of so many disparate groups. Law becomes the *only* principle of order, for there is no shared moral or social vision that might otherwise bind together a nation. Prof. Louis Hartz points out that "political thought is as much the record of a yearning as it is the record of a reality." Our present reiteration of the need for the rule of law is eloquent testimony to our yearning for a genuine national community; we mistake it at our peril, however, if we regard it as a reality.

The rule of law, if it is to be worthy of faith, must be something other than the will of those with power within the state, even if they are the majority; it must be something more than the barking commands of those individuals holding office (including the office of judge). The recurrent ability of "unjust, tyrannical, destructive," and "repressive" laws to gain Supreme Court imprimatur should caution us against coming forward too rapidly to accept the gospel of rule of law as our salvation.

**I**N LIGHT OF SO MUCH contradictory evidence, it is surprising that two major hypotheses persist: (1) the assumption that the "imperatives of the Constitutional system" are self-evident, at least to men and women of goodwill, and (2) the assumption that these have remained constant since the establishment of the Constitutional system in 1789, modified only by amendments. However, the activities of earlier Presidents (or Congresses or Supreme Courts) present problems for anyone seeking an unequivocal American tradition against which to measure political leadership and define the rule of law.

Examples abound, beginning with Jefferson's questionable expansion of Presidential power in the decision to purchase Louisiana from France in 1803. Perhaps the most poignant example, however, comes from Lincoln's Presidency. Lincoln had once defined "reverence for the laws" as the basic tenet underlying





Sanford Levinson  
THE SPECIOUS  
MORALITY  
OF THE LAW

what he termed the "political religion of the nation." "Every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity," Lincoln asserted, must "swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of the country; and never to tolerate their violation by others." All laws should be "religiously observed."

It was this same man, though, who as President defended his own putative disobedience of constitutional provisions relating to habeas corpus by asking, "Are all the laws, *but one*, to go unexecuted, and the government itself to go to pieces, lest that one be violated?" This raises the question, Was Nixon's offense his disobedience of the law or, rather, his failure to present a plausible case for his violations of law as necessary to "national security"? Would we really have cared about his illegalities had we been persuaded that he, like Lincoln, was simply sacrificing the equivalent of one law for the sake of the national good? (It should scarcely need pointing out, incidentally, that the one law violated by Lincoln was a considerably greater transgression of civil liberties than any single act traced to Nixon, for the right to habeas corpus is regarded by many as *the* basic civil liberty.)

The role of the great political leader is often to assume the almost Nietzschean task of going beyond the law in an effort to transform the society that he purports to lead; a wager is made on the historical outcome, with the final assessment of the leader left to be determined by whether the bet as to the shape of the future is won or lost. We no longer care that Lincoln might have behaved most dubiously in regard to pre-1860 "imperatives" of the Constitution because his memorable vision of what this country was truly about, which involved transcending the existing constitutional structure and its support for slavery, has prevailed and become part of our ordinary political consciousness.

Henry Kissinger, no stranger to violating law, both domestic and international, in the name of higher goals, has perhaps stated the matter best:

*The statesman is therefore like one of the heroes in classical drama who has had a vision of the future but who cannot transmit it directly to his fellow-men and who cannot validate its "truth." Nations learn only by experience; they "know" only when it is too late to act. But statesmen must act as if their intuition were already experience, as if their aspiration were truth. It is for this reason that statesmen often share the fate of prophets, that they are without honor in their own country, . . . and that their greatness is usually appar-*

*ent only in retrospect when their intuition has become experience.*

Such disparate men as Kissinger, Lincoln, Jefferson, and Fidel Castro ("History will absolve me") are joined by their common recognition that we live in a radically contingent world where rules do not always exist for the dimensions of proper action. One chooses which, if any, among these leaders to respect not according to their fidelity to law, but the visions they put forth to justify transcending the law. Acceptance of these visions by successor generations, as in the case of our "great" Presidents, almost all of whom have been activist, should not blind us to the original context of the activity. Those who accused Jefferson, Lincoln, or FDR of violating constitutional imperatives were not making frivolous arguments; but they have been history's losers, free to be disregarded or ridiculed.

It is obvious that the meaning of the Constitution has changed over time, and only rarely because of explicit amendment. The Supreme Court on its own has been more than willing to endorse and/or supply the new meanings. Those who see the Court's importance as revolving around its ability to declare statutes unconstitutional forget that the Court has done this extremely infrequently. Much more often it has upheld all sorts of activity that might well be regarded as alien to the spirit of the Constitution. In law as in sex, though, the value of a yes answer to all sorts of dubious propositions is directly related to the possibility, however remote, that the answer could have been no. The occasional striking down of statutes helps to reinforce the belief that the literally thousands of statutes and acts which do pass the Court's review *must* be all right.

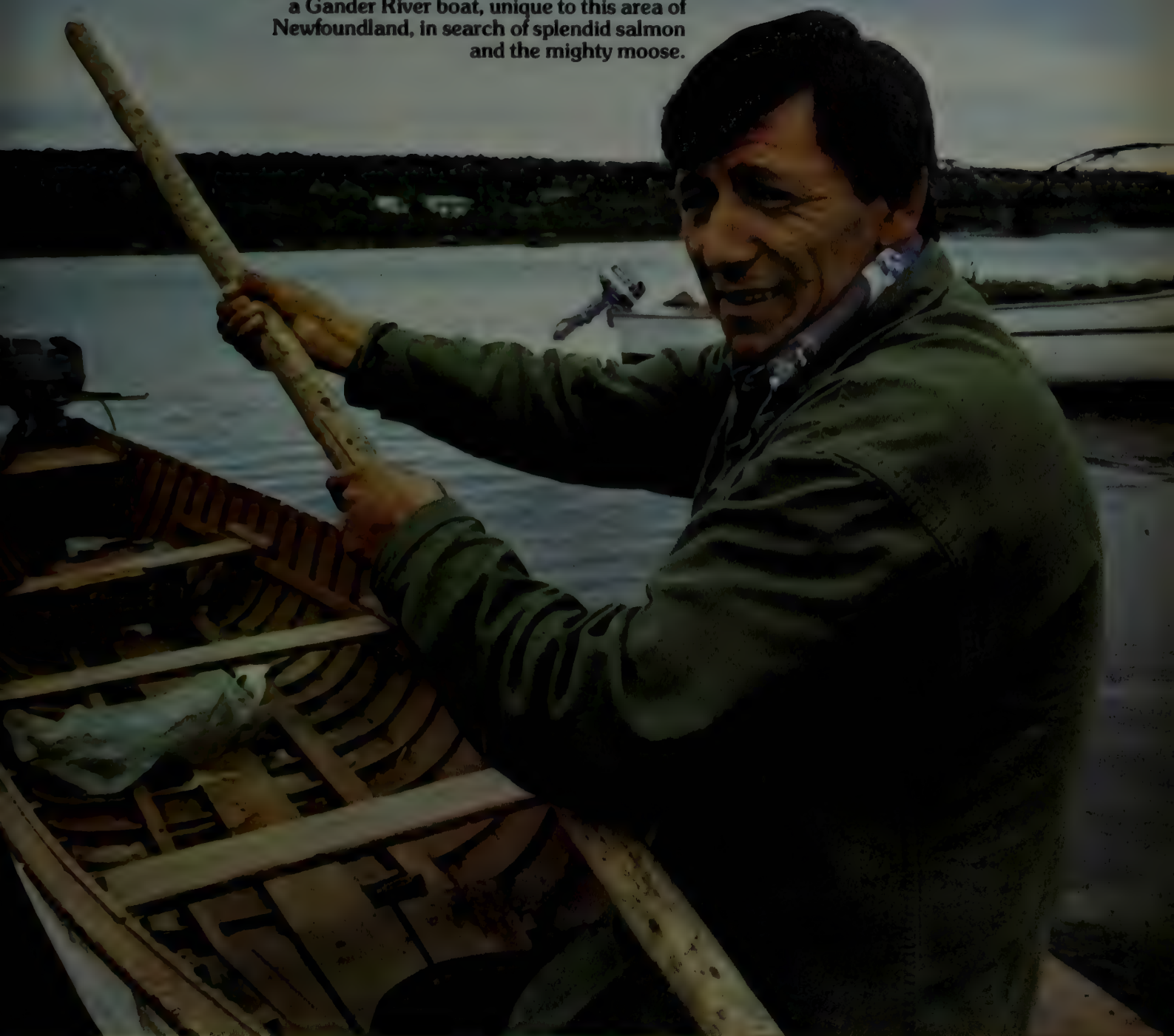
The Constitution of 1787 is related to today's Constitution only in metaphorical ways. But recognition of this point presents severe problems for anyone beseeching us to have faith in the Constitution. A faith whose premises change radically over time is scarcely the rock upon which to rely for support, and the denial that premises have changed makes much of the American past incomprehensible.

There are yet further flaws in the arguments of those who view the solution to our present discontents in a return to the lessons of our past. The Revolutionary generation had a commitment to the rule of law, but it was law as they interpreted it, not as it was interpreted by British authorities they regarded as decadent and corrupt. The revolutionaries were scarcely the moderates beloved by Bickel. Adams himself admitted that (Continued on page 99)



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# THE PUBLIC USE OF PRIVATE INTEREST

by Charles L. Schultze

*During the 1960s the belief took hold that some kind of federal budgetary program or federal regulatory agency could be designed to deal with almost any social or economic problem. Now it is widely recognized that most federal programs do not work well, and consist principally of "throwing money at problems." The rash of new regulatory mechanisms established in recent years—for pollution control, industrial health and safety, and consumer product quality and safety—have begun to generate resentment against excessive red tape. Yet a large majority of the public still believes that the federal government has responsibility for ensuring a decent income for the poor, seeing that jobs are available for those wanting work, and controlling inflation.*

*Conservatives argue that recently adopted social interventions have been a mistake. Not only is there a general sense of malaise that government is per-*

*forming its new tasks ineffectively, but a growing body of objective evidence suggests that this perception is correct. The liberal argument holds that there is nothing inherently wrong in the recent trend of interventionism, and that most of these problems could be straightened out by reforming election laws, undertaking more thorough policy analyses, and devoting more money to underfunded programs.*

*In what follows, Charles L. Schultze, now chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, argues that this polarity of viewpoints offers little help in dealing with reality. Mr. Schultze sets forth a number of conditions to determine when and how, or if at all, government should intervene. Specifically, he takes issue with the established methods of our society in dealing with what we perceive as a market failure, and hence a reason for government intervention or collective action, and offers various suggestions for alternative approaches.*

## The growth of regulation

**I**N 1930, SOME 8 PERCENT of the gross national income was spent by federal, state, and local governments for purposes other than national defense and foreign affairs. Except for the spread of publicly provided elementary and secondary education, this fraction had not grown substantially since the Civil War. In the next thirty years, however, the proportion of national income spent for the domestic programs of government rose to 13.5 percent. Today, only sixteen years later, such expenditures amount to 24 percent of gross national income. Interest on the debt and cash transfers for direct income support to individuals now make up one-third of those expenditures. The remainder, however, represents some form of government delivery of goods and services or provi-

sion of subsidies. The fraction of national income taken for these purposes by the federal government itself was less than 1 percent of national income in 1930, but grew to 4 percent by 1960 and then to 8 percent by 1976.

The growth of federal regulatory activities has been even more striking. Even as late as the middle 1950s there were only four areas in which the federal government had a major regulatory responsibility: antitrust, financial institutions, transportation, and communications. In 1976 there were seventy-seven federal agencies engaged in regulating some aspect of private activity.

Until perhaps fifteen or twenty years ago, most federal activities in the domestic sphere were confined to a few broad areas: providing cash income under Social Security programs for which eligibility was fairly easily determined; undertaking basic investments in a few sectors of the economy, principally highways, water resources, and high-rise public housing; regulating a selected list of industries for the alleged purpose of controlling monopoly or preventing certain abuses; and a series of house-

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keeping activities, such as running the Post Office, the national parks, the merchant seamen's hospitals, and the air navigation system. But in a short space of twenty years the very nature of federal activity has changed radically toward much more complex and difficult objectives. The newer programs are different, and the older ones have taken on more ambitious goals. In the field of energy and environmental policy the generally accepted objectives of national policy imply a staggeringly complex and interlocking set of actions directly affecting the production and consumption decision of every citizen and every business firm.

In a society which relies on private enterprise and market incentives to carry out most productive activity, there is a critical choice to be made beyond the question of whether or not to intervene. Should intervention be carried out principally by grafting a specific command-and-control module onto the private enterprise incentive-oriented system, usually in the form of a regulatory apparatus, or should it be undertaken by modifying the informational flow, institutional structure, or incentive pattern of that private system? Neither approach is universally appropriate to every situation. But our political system almost always chooses the command-and-control response and seldom tries the other alternatives. What follows is an analysis of the reasons for this bias, an estimate of its costs and consequences, and suggested areas in which the alternative of institution-building, incentive, and information would be superior.

## The standard pattern of social intervention

**T**HE TERM *social* (or *collective*) *intervention* assumes a good deal. It implies the rebuttable presumption that the desirable mode of carrying out economic and social activities is through a network of private and voluntary arrangements—called, for short, “the private market.” A theory of social intervention is thus concerned with defining the conditions under which that presumption is indeed rebuttable.

We think of the public sector as intervening in the private and not vice versa; though in most societies throughout history (and in many today) the presumption ran the other way. With only a

little facetiousness Lenin's New Economic Policy of the early 1920s and the current attempts to introduce profitlike calculations into Eastern European economies might be labeled “private intervention into the collective system.” But in the United States, reform movements and interventionist policies seldom have questioned the “rebuttable presumption” approach. The strong populist streak which runs through U.S. reformist history, and is still reflected in political rhetoric, always had small businessmen and family farmers high on its list of heroes. Populism sought to help its heroes with cheap money and by breaking up or regulating monopolies, not by nationalizing them. Even the Tennessee Valley Authority was sold as a “yardstick” for privately owned utilities, not as the first step toward public ownership.

The rebuttable presumption approach is also an implicit philosophical underpinning of modern welfare economics. The theory of social intervention for purposes of microefficiency (as distinct from income redistribution) is built upon three pillars: an analysis of the formal characteristics of an efficient economic system (Pareto optimality); a specification of the conditions under which a decentralized market system with private ownership of property will duplicate those characteristics (the duality conditions); and an identification of the particular situations in which existing private markets do not or cannot meet those conditions (market failure).

The rebuttable presumption hypothesis, however, has provided little guidance for the social intervention that has actually occurred, except to rule out nationalization of industry as an acceptable solution. There is little connection between the rebuttable presumption approach as worked out by modern welfare theory and its application to social legislation. Once a political battle to intervene has been won in some broad area—environmental control, reduction of industrial accidents, or standards for nursing homes and day-care centers—the extent and scope of the resulting social controls are seldom grounded in a specific analysis of where and to what extent the private market fails to meet acceptable standards. Similarly, there is seldom any attempt to design techniques of intervention which preserve some of the virtues of the free market. The usual instruments of social control do not involve the use of incentives, the creation of market analogues, or the promotion of competitive institutions. Apart from income-maintenance programs, the techniques of intervention are pretty well confined to centralized regulatory bodies, governmental delivery of free services, and categorical grants to subordinate units of government.



To some extent political action and economic theory treat the actual instruments of social intervention as a series of black boxes. One first identifies a market failure—environmental pollution or industrial accidents or a mismatch between jobs and people in the labor market. If the political system can generate a consensus that some form of social intervention is called for, the job is turned over to the black box. Within the box a group of presumably omniscient and disinterested bureaucrats determine what is to be done and issue the necessary directives. It is ironic, indeed, that a society whose citizens absorb the praises of the market's libertarian and economic virtues almost with their mothers' milk, and an economics profession which cut its teeth on demonstrating how a decentralized incentive system can produce socially desirable outcomes, should give such short shrift to the same concepts when it comes to forging tools for collective action.

The power of economic incentives to generate steadily improving efficiency we acknowledge and employ to bring us whitewall tires, cosmetics, and television sets. But when it comes to something really important like education, we eschew incentives completely. We would find it amusing if someone suggested that the best way to reduce labor input per unit of production would be to set up an agency specifying labor input in detail for each industry. But that is precisely how we are going about trying to reduce environmental damages and industrial accidents.

## Virtues of the market

**Q**UITE APART FROM their maximizing characteristics, as elaborated in formal economic theory, the buyer-seller relationships of the marketplace have substantial advantages as a form of social organization. In the first place, social relationships in the market are a form of unanimous consent arrangement. When dealing with each other in a buy-sell transaction, individuals can act voluntarily on the basis of mutual advantage to both parties. Organizing large-scale social activity through the other alternative open to a free society—democratic majoritarian politics—necessarily implies that in each particular decision there

will be some minority that disapproves. Everything else being equal, unanimous consent arrangements are much more attractive politically than any other alternative. Obviously everything else is not always equal. If the income distribution is grossly unfair, the concept of voluntary decisions and unanimous consent is a charade—the coercion of economic necessity is not less real for being economic instead of political. But I am not trying to make the point that the unfettered market is always superior, rather that its buy-sell arrangements have a major social advantage. In designing techniques for collective intervention, the gains from preserving some or all of these arrangements should be given significant weight. Occasions to do so come up all the time: If government is to give assistance to higher education, should it do so through aid to individual students who can then “buy” education where they choose, or should it be through direct subsidies to colleges and universities? Should federal manpower training subsidies principally take the form, as they do now, of grants to training institutions or to manpower training vouchers to individuals, in the manner of the GI Bill of Rights? Should the federal government stipulate in detail safety regulations for each industrial workplace or should it put a stiff price on industrial accidents (e.g., by a tax on injury rates) and let individual firms decide how to respond in order to reduce their tax bill? To say that the principle of voluntary decisions should be given weight does not mean it should be the sole criterion. But precisely because the legitimate occasions for social intervention will surely increase as time goes on, the desirability of preserving and expanding the role of choice takes on added importance. Marketlike arrangements not only minimize the need for coercion as a means of social organization, they also reduce the need for compassion, patriotism, brotherly love, and cultural solidarity as motivating forces behind social improvement.

Learning how to harness the “base” motive of material self-interest to promote the common good was perhaps *the* most important social invention mankind has yet made. Turning silk into a silk purse is no great shakes, but converting a sow's ear into a silk purse does indeed partake of the miraculous. In the abstract we accept that view, but sometimes in discussing the specifics of social intervention we are loath to apply it. If I want industry to cut down on pollution, indignant tirades about social responsibility can't hold a candle to schemes which reduce the profits of firms who pollute. If I want drivers to economize on gasoline usage, advertising appeals to patriotism, reminders of the energy crisis, and “Don't be fuelish” slogans



cannot match the effect of higher prices at the gas pumps. In most cases the prerequisite for social gains is the identification not of villains and heroes but of the defects in the incentive system which drive ordinary decent citizens into doing things contrary to the common good. There is indeed a role for "preaching" as a means of creating a political and cultural situation in which consensus can be reached on social intervention. Cleaning up the environment will only be achieved as environmental quality takes a higher place in the value system of most citizens. But when it comes to the specifics of getting the job done, preaching, indignation, and villain identification get in the way of results.

## II

**A**

### SECOND ADVANTAGE

of the market as an organizing principle for social activity is that it reduces the need for hard-to-get information. We think it a major problem that educational research has failed to come up with any evidence which convincingly tells us what will make Johnny read better. We have been unable to determine the production function for education—the relationship among teacher-pupil ratios, curricula, and facilities on the one hand and educational results on the other. There are a number of reasons for this failure, but chief among them is our inability to define and measure either inputs or results satisfactorily.

The more complicated and extensive the nature of social intervention, and the more it seeks to change individual behavior, the more difficult it becomes to acquire the necessary information at a central level. It is relatively easy to set up a system of payroll records from which to determine Social Security benefits. Doing something about the delivery structure of medical care or controlling industrial accidents requires a much more complex system of information-gathering. Obviously, on the basis of informational economics, one does not rush out and recommend that education be turned over to the private market and sold like toothpaste, or that simple effluent charges displace all pollution-control regulations. But, where feasible, building some freedom of choice into social programs does provide substantial advantages, either in generating explicit information for policy-makers about the desirability of alternative outcomes or in bypassing the need for certain types of information altogether.

## III

**A**

### THIRD ADVANTAGE

of the market as a means of social organization is its "devil-take-the-hindmost" approach to questions of individual equity. At first blush this is an outrageous statement, worthy of the coldest heart among the nineteenth-century Benthamites. And obviously I have stated the point in a way more designed to catch the eye than to be precise.

In any except a completely stagnant society, an efficient use of resources requires constant change. Consumer tastes, production technologies, locational advantages, and resource availabilities are always in flux. From the standpoint of static efficiency, the more completely and rapidly the economy shifts production to meet changes in tastes, resource availability, or locational advantages the greater the efficiency. From a dynamic standpoint, the greater the advances in technology and the faster they are adopted, the greater the efficiency. While these changes on balance generate gains for society in the form of higher living standards, almost every one of them causes a loss of income to some firms and individuals, often temporary and for only a few, but sometimes long-lasting and for large numbers. The introduction of a new technology in a particular firm may displace a handful of skilled workers who, after a period of unemployment, find equivalent jobs elsewhere. Or a shoe factory in a one-plant community may close, permanently lowering the income of middle-aged skilled workers, local merchants, and property owners. Both of these types of income losses may occur in an economy running at full employment; both types of losses are even greater in a recession. Under the social arrangements of the private market, those who may suffer losses are not usually able to stand in the way of change. As a consequence, efficiency-creating changes are not seriously impeded.

There are three ways in which society can deal with these income losses: (1) Prevent the particular changes from taking place, thereby making the question moot; (2) Make it up to the losers either with monetary payments (compensation) or with offsetting changes that improve the losers' welfare (logrolling); (3) Don't compensate for each change, but through the tax and transfer system try to make sure that the cumulative result of all the changes is an income distribution that meets society's standards of fairness and equity.



Our society employs substantially different standards and values when dealing with losses associated with market efficiency and when faced with the possibility of losses through government actions. We are rather chary in dealing with losses by preventing efficiency-creating moves in the marketplace but very prone to use this technique when it comes to collective actions. Over the years the American political system has developed a set of formal and informal rules about losses associated with political decisions. First, we tend to subject political decisions to the rule "Do no direct harm." We can let harm occur as the second- and third-order consequences of political action, or through sheer inaction, but we cannot be seen to cause harm to anyone as the direct consequence of collective actions. The rule is far from absolute, and exceptions abound. But it does strongly influence policy. The specific application of the rule is handled, in a limited sphere of cases, by monetary compensations, as, for example, in the taking of private property for a highway. Unemployment compensation is another example. But most usually the prevention of loss is sought by trying to design collective action to avoid it in the first place.

Dealing with the problem of losses which an emphasis on efficiency necessarily raises is, of course, one of the stickiest social issues. There is absolutely nothing in either economic or political theory which argues that efficiency considerations should always take precedence. And sometimes there is no way to avoid unconscionably large losses to some particular group except by avoiding or at least moderating changes otherwise called for by efficiency considerations. Nevertheless, when it comes to the design of instruments for collective intervention, we place far too much stress on avoiding efficient solutions, and far too little stress on compensation and general income-distribution measures as loss-avoidance techniques.

#### IV

**T**

HE FINAL VIRTUE of marketlike arrangements is their potential ability to direct innovation into socially desirable directions. While the formal economic theory of the market stresses its static efficiency characteristics—its ability to get the most out of existing resources and technology—what is far more important is its apparent capacity to stimulate and take advantage of

advancing technology. Living standards in modern Western countries are, by order of magnitude, superior to those of the early seventeenth century. Had the triumph of the market meant only a more efficient use of the technologies and resources then available, the gains in living standards would have been minuscule by comparison. What made the difference was the stimulation and harnessing of new technologies and resources.

It is not simply that market incentives and the price system stimulate new technologies in general, but that they tend to direct invention toward conserving those resources which are scarce. Agricultural technology for grain production in the United States developed in the direction of using much land (which was abundant) and little labor (which was scarce). It developed differently in Europe and Japan where land is far less plentiful relative to labor. More generally, most economic analysis of the nature of inventions suggests that they tend to occur in very rough conformity with economic needs and scarcities as signaled by prices and profitability. The corollary to these propositions is that where prices give the wrong signal—that is, do not reflect true economic scarcity—technology responds accordingly. Pollution is a classic case. For hundreds of years, environmental quality was treated as a free resource. The market, responding with marvelous efficiency to that signal, proceeded to develop technology which made maximum use of the air and water as "free" sinks for waste products, and paid no attention to the development of technologies which reduced pollution per unit of output. Automobile engines were designed for speed, acceleration, and low production costs, to the accompaniment of smog-creating emissions. Steel mills, coking plants, and paper mills were built to economize on labor and other costs, while using, and fouling, incredible volumes of air and water. This was in sharp contrast to the case of another resource—labor: labor is expensive; business firms must pay for it, at ever-increasing real wages. As a consequence, over the past century, the amount of labor per unit of output has been halved every fifteen years.

From a long-range standpoint, the effectiveness of social intervention in a number of important areas critically depends on paying attention to this lesson. Much of the economic literature on pollution control, for example, stresses the role of economic incentives to achieve static efficiency in control measures—that is, using existing technology in a way which reaches environmental goals at least cost. In the long run, however, the future of society is going to hinge in an important way on the discovery and adoption of ever-improving technology to reduce the



environmental consequences of increasing production. If, for example, we assume that per capita living standards in the United States improve from now on at only one-half the rate of the past century, the GNP 100 years from now will still increase more than threefold. Median family income, now about \$14,000, will equal about \$55,000. Only if the amount of pollution per unit of output is cut by two-thirds can we maintain current environmental performance, much less improve it—even with the assumption that the rate of economic growth is halved. There is simply no way such reductions can be achieved unless the direction of technological change is shifted to minimize pollution.

The problem of environmental quality permeates most of the production and consumption aspects of the economy. Hence the discovery and adoption of pollution-reducing technology will have to be equally pervasive. Unlike the space program or the Manhattan Project, it is not a task that central direction can accomplish well. Rather the institutions and incentives of society have to be modified for a steady long-run effort. Reducing pollution has to become a paying proposition rather than a set of regulations to be fought and delayed.

Congestion in central cities, chemical threats to health, sharply rising medical costs, and the pressure of economic growth on scarce natural resources are other problem areas in which some form of social intervention already exists and in which the avoidance of long-term problems depends especially on the response of technological development to social needs. The point is not that the unfettered market can deal with these problems. Indeed, the problems arise because the market as it is now structured does not work well. But in designing the techniques of social intervention, the historically demonstrated power of marketlike incentives to influence the pace and direction of technological change warrants every effort to install such incentives in our social programs.

## The causes of market failure

**W**ITHIN THE SPHERE of activities not excluded from the market by considerations of liberty and dignity, there remains a large number of situations in which the free-enterprise

private market as we now know it does not produce efficient results. Where the deviations are serious, a *prima facie* case arises for collective intervention on grounds of efficiency alone. Paradoxically, most of these situations occur where the existing private-enterprise system itself does not make a proper market for some important output or input.

Where the market process fails, too much or too little of some particular output will be produced. We get too little environmental quality, or too many industrial accidents, or too much traffic congestion. Society can go about dealing with market failure in two quite different ways. It can try to isolate the causes of the failure and restore, as nearly as possible, an efficient market process. Or it can take matters completely into its own hands, supplant the market process, and directly determine the outputs it wants. In other words, social intervention can be *process-oriented*, seeking to correct the faulty process, or *output-oriented*, seeking to bypass the process and determine outputs directly by regulation or other device.

Regardless of the circumstances, however, social intervention has almost always been output-oriented, giving short shrift to the process-oriented alternative. And this has been a costly bias. It has taxed, well beyond its limit, the ability of government to make complex output decisions. And it has stretched thin the delicate fabric of political consensus by unnecessarily widening the scope of activities it must cover.

The structure of the private-enterprise system and the efficiency with which it operates depend in an important way on the contents of our system of property and contract laws. The free-enterprise system in this respect carries the label "made by government." How efficiently that system works at any point in time is strongly conditioned by how well the structure of property laws matches the underlying technological and economic realities. If those realities change, and property laws do not, there is bound to be trouble.

There is a second basic proposition which underlies an identification and analysis of market failure. To be an efficient instrument for society, a private market must be so organized that buyers and sellers realize *all* the benefits and pay *all* the costs of each transaction. Another way to state the same requirement is that the price paid by the buyer and the costs incurred by the seller in each private transaction reflect the full value and the full cost of that transaction not only to them, but to society as a whole. My decision to drive to work will reflect my own balancing of the benefits I receive from auto transportation against the money and time costs I thereby incur. But if streets are already congested,



the addition of my car to the traffic will lengthen the time it takes everyone else to commute and will impose real costs on society that I did not take into account in my own decision. There will be more auto commuting than is truly efficient.

As a very rough-and-ready generalization, the body of laws governing property rights and liabilities is likely to yield inefficient results principally when dealing with the side effects of private market transactions. The problem is not that side effects exist, but that the benefits they confer or the costs they impose are often not reflected in the prices and costs which guide private decisions. In some cases the side effects are confined to the parties making the transaction, as in the case of many consumer product defects or job-related injuries. But often the side effects impose costs (or confer benefits) on large numbers of people who were not parties to the transaction. Air and water pollution from industrial production cause damage over wide areas to people who had no part in the production or purchase of the goods being produced. Auto commuters on congested streets create traffic delays for each other with no transactions involved. To the extent that an educated population makes for a better citizenry, my decision to send my children to college generates side effects by way of social benefits to the whole population.

Where side effects are confined to the particular parties in a transaction, proper specification of the laws governing private property can sometimes insure that a side effect is properly reflected in the private accounting of costs and benefits. Where this is possible, establishing some continuing mechanism of social intervention is unnecessary. Individual buy-and-sell arrangements can efficiently reflect social values. The introduction of workmen's compensation laws, for example, shifted the *prima facie* liability for work-related injuries to employers—that is, the injured worker did not have to prove negligence in court in order to collect damages. The intent of the shift was to make it more probable that employers would face the true social costs of their choices about how to organize production, and thus, for the sake of increasing their own profits, act to reduce such costs.

In many cases, however, the very nature of the situation is such that merely redefining property rights will not deal with the problem; markets cannot be organized by purely private efforts, or, if so, only at great cost. This is sometimes true even when the side effects are confined to the parties making a transaction. It is almost universally true where large numbers of other parties are involved.

There are essentially four sets of factors, the existence of which leads to market failure and also

limits the range of corrective action available to society: high transaction costs; high information costs; large uncertainty; and, finally, what economists call the "free rider" problem. They are often present in combination.

**Transaction costs:** Markets are not costless. There are expenses of money, time, and effort in setting and collecting prices. Sometimes transaction costs are virtually infinite—there is no conceivable way that a market can be formed to deal with side effects. Sometimes transaction costs, while not infinite, exceed the benefits which a market could otherwise confer, and so it doesn't pay to set one up. Very often the existence of transaction costs forces us to organize markets in less than an ideal way; the scope and nature of the transaction costs strongly limit the range of effective social intervention.

Traffic congestion provides a good example of all of these situations. The decisions of individual drivers to commute through crowded downtown streets creates costly side effects—each decision to drive imposes delay costs on other drivers. Could the law be changed to create property rights in the side effects: I would have to buy "rights" to drive from other drivers on whom my decisions would impose delay? Obviously not. There is no conceivable way in which the tens of thousands of drivers could mutually calculate bids and offers, transfer net balances of payments, and monitor and enforce agreements. Could local governments establish a quasimarket—set up a schedule of congestion tolls and charge each driver according to the time of day and the degree of congestion along the particular streets he travels? While ingenious schemes have been suggested, involving radar and computerized billing, the costs of setting up such quasimarkets would seem to rule them out. What about stiff parking fees downtown, or the sale by government of monthly downtown auto permits? Those who value their daily auto trip highly would be willing to pay; others would use mass transit. Congestion could be reduced for both groups. The transaction costs of such a scheme would be much lower, but the prices charged would lose some of their relationship to the particular circumstances causing congestion. My contribution to congestion varies according to when I drive and along what streets—the parking fee or commuting permit charges me a price which is only the roughest sort of approximation to that contribution. Hence, the resulting scheme will not be ideally efficient. Nevertheless, it may (or may not) lead to a more efficient result than the two polar opposites—do nothing, or forbid the use of certain areas to private automobiles.



**Uncertainty and information costs:** It is easier to treat the problems of uncertainty and information costs together since it is through information that we can, at least sometimes, reduce uncertainty. Market transactions cannot be an efficient method of organizing human activity unless both the buyer and the seller know and understand the full costs and benefits to them of the transactions they undertake, including any side effects which impinge on their own welfare. If, for example, the legal principle of *caveat emptor* prevails, consumers are responsible for judging the reliability and safety of the products they buy. If, at reasonable costs in time, money, and mental effort, they can acquire and interpret information about the quality of products, then more reliable and safer brands will command a premium over less reliable and dangerous products. The premium will reflect consumer judgments about the value to them of reliability and safety. Producers in turn will find it profitable to push reliability and safety up to the point where the costs of doing so begin to exceed the premium—in short, an efficient outcome will be assured.

There is sometimes a dilemma in the public provision of consumer information. In the case of hazards which are highly complicated, the provision of technically complete but neutral information may not be very helpful. Evaluating the significance of the hazard on the basis of new information may itself require more technical ability and judgment and a larger amount of time than it is reasonable to expect from most consumers. Government could then regulate the safety characteristics of such products, almost always causing the price to be higher. And in some cases a ban on certain types of products may be imposed, which is equivalent to charging an infinitely high price. In such situations the single risk-evaluation of a governmental body is substituted for the diverse judgments of millions of consumers.

The temptation to overregulate is great, and should be resisted. Quite apart from safety features, there are a host of product characteristics—performance, reliability, durability—which often depend upon highly technical factors. Consumer information about such characteristics, as it is usually acquired, is most often casual and imperfect, and in the case of durable goods cannot be acquired by repetitive trial and error. Market demand and product price differentials therefore do not reflect evaluations based on perfect information. If the mere existence of market imperfection is allowed to become the occasion for regulation, then we would have to regulate every characteristic of every durable product. But the benefits of potentially superior information which a regulator can bring

to bear have to be balanced against the inability of monolithic regulatory judgments to match the diverse preferences of individuals and by the inevitable sluggishness with which regulators adapt to changing circumstances. Where the potential harms from a product feature are great and where the technical difficulty of evaluating information is very high, then regulation may be the best alternative, despite its inefficiencies. But in all cases we should compare an imperfect market with an imperfect regulatory scheme, not with some ideal and omniscient abstraction.

**The “free rider” problem:** Where the side effects of private transactions have a common impact on many people—for example, the discharge of sulfur into the atmosphere from coal-burning utilities—the possibility of purely private action is severely limited. In theory, if the rights to the use of the clean air were assigned by law to the polluter, those affected might band together and pay the polluter to reduce the emissions. But any one individual would enjoy the benefits of reduced pollution whether he paid his share of the cost or not. He could be a “free rider” on the efforts of everyone else. How could cost shares be decided and enforced? Without the coercive power of government, purely voluntary arrangements could not be successful. Conversely, if the rights were assigned to those affected by pollution so that the polluter had to buy rights to emit sulfur, how would agreement be reached on the appropriate size of the payments and the sharing out of the proceeds? Purely voluntary action implies unanimous consent.

We do undertake some actions of this nature by unanimous consent arrangements. The implicit neighborhood agreement that no one mows the lawn on Sunday morning is one such arrangement. But as a means of dealing with important and widespread side effects of private transactions, voluntary arrangements would quickly break down.

## The inadequate response to market failure

**U**SUALLY, WHEN A specific problem has been singled out for public action, there has been little attempt to isolate the particular causes of market failure and deal with them



in a way which preserves as many as possible of the elements of voluntary choice and private incentives in the affected area. Rather, intervention typically takes the form of substituting a centralized command-and-control approach to decision-making over a far broader area than is necessary to deal with the specific market failure in question. It is impossible to provide an overall measurement of the mismatch between the occasions for intervention and the forms which intervention has actually taken. But several broad traits have characterized public policy: the effort to affect private activity by regulation and state and local governments by detailed grant programs.

One very broad class of market failure stems from the inability of the unaided private market to put a price on important side effects of economic transactions and so to subject them to the efficiency calculus which balances costs against gains. As we saw, changes in property laws cannot usually create an ideal pricing structure for side effects, given the complicated situations in which many of them occur. Hence, in each specific case we have to balance the less than perfect efficiency of an artificially created pricing structure against the less than perfect efficiency of a regulatory or other nonpricing approach. The virtually universal characteristic of public policy in these circumstances is to *start* from the conclusion that regulation is the obvious answer; the pricing alternative is literally never considered.

Precisely because environmental problems are so pervasive, they illustrate the entire gamut of situations, ranging from those in which environmental side effects can reasonably be priced to those in which information or transaction costs make pricing ineffective or excessively expensive. Effective policy must take account of the fact that in almost every industry and every situation there are alternative ways to reduce pollution that vary widely in effectiveness and cost. Nationally, the difference between efficient and inefficient control programs can, over a ten-year period, mount into the hundreds of billions of dollars. Policy must also operate in a world of imperfect knowledge in which the relative cost and effectiveness of various abatement techniques and the effect of pollutants on the environment are subject to great uncertainty. Policy must deal both with situations where targets and deadlines can and ought to be adjusted depending on costs and other circumstances, and with cases of potentially fatal toxic chemicals where little flexibility is possible. And, finally, policy should avoid prematurely locking the nation into uniform technological choices that discourage a continuing search for better control methods.

## The example of water pollution

**L**ET US EXAMINE, by way of example, the nation's program to control water pollution. Prior to 1972, national strategy was based on a four-stage process: federal approval of state-established water-quality standards; state implementation plans, requiring industrial firms and municipalities along a river basin to reduce pollution discharges so as to meet the standards; federal grants-in-aid for the construction of municipal waste-treatment plants; and court enforcement against firms or municipalities whose failure to act caused a breach of water-quality standards.

For a host of reasons this approach failed, mainly because, on a river basin with many firms and municipalities, it is impossible to pinpoint the blame for a breach of water-quality standards, especially given the rules of evidence in judicial proceedings. The 1972 Water Pollution Control Act Amendments adopted a drastically new approach. The law required the Environmental Protection Agency to develop specific effluent limits on water-borne pollutants for each type of industrial process, and to issue permits to every industrial firm based on those limits. By 1977 the effluent limits are to be consistent with the use of "the best practicable control methods"; by 1983 tighter limits based on "best available technology" are to be enforced.

In carrying out these objectives EPA is directed to take into account "the age of equipment and facilities involved, the process employed, the engineering aspects of the application of various types of control techniques, process changes, nonwater-quality environmental impacts (including energy requirements) and such other factors as the Administrator deems appropriate." In addition, EPA must consider what is "economically achievable."

There are 62,000 point sources of water pollution in the United States, of which 9,000 are major sources, with huge variation among them in the factors that EPA is supposed to consider—industrial processes, age of equipment, economic situation, and so forth. EPA is therefore required to amend its effluent regulations in some detail. In any



given situation there is usually a broad range of possibilities available for pollution reduction—changing the type of raw material used, altering the production itself, modifying the characteristics of the product, treating the wastes before they emerge from the end of the pipe, or sending the pollution through the sewer system and paying to have them treated at the municipal waste-treatment plant. Selecting the appropriate effluent limitation for each firm, in a way that will produce an efficient and effective overall strategy, depends on balancing these possibilities against their respective costs, taking into account the particular economic circumstances confronting each firm. To do this for 62,000 point sources of pollution demands omniscience from EPA.

By mid-1976 EPA had promulgated or was in the process of developing some 492 different effluent guidelines, and had issued 45,000 individual plant permits. Given the language of the act, there is substantial room for legal challenges. In April 1976 EPA withdrew all its guidelines for organic chemicals because of a court challenge. Requests for administrative hearings are pending for more than one-tenth of all the industrial permits issued. Moreover, while the law foresaw state governments taking over the permit programs, after EPA approval and with EPA monitoring, only twenty-seven states have done so, and, according to EPA, prospects for more doing so are very dim. Finally, an analysis of the program by the General Accounting Office based on a sample review found that most permits issued were not based on the final guidelines and, in any event, firms were not adhering to the conditions of the permits.

In effect, the current law sets up a central agency to determine a detailed control strategy for every polluting source, balancing environmental gains against economic costs. Difficult as this is in a static context, it is dwarfed by the continuing problem of keeping the guidelines up to date in the light of economic growth and technological change. And the very nature of the controls works in the direction of discouraging pollution-reducing technological change. The 1983 criteria bases effluent limits on "best available technology." But what firm will sponsor research or undertake experimentation to develop a new means of reducing pollution still further, if its very availability will generate new and more stringent regulations?

The entire approach provides strong and positive incentives for polluters to use the legal system to delay progress toward effective cleanup. It forces a central control agency to make thousands of decisions based on detailed considerations it cannot possibly know and, even less, keep up with over time. And most important, it provides absolutely

no incentives to firms and municipalities to channel technological innovation toward the efficient reduction of pollution.

It is possible, on the other hand, to use an effluent charge to put a common price on each of the major forms of water pollutants. If the polluting side effects of industrial activity were priced, several consequences would follow. Depending on the size of the effluent charge, firms would have incentives to reduce pollution in order to increase their own profits, or to avoid losses. The higher the charge, the greater the reduction; hence, the fee could be adjusted to achieve any desired set of water-quality standards. Firms with low costs of reducing pollution would reduce their waste discharges by more than firms with high costs of production, which is precisely what is needed to achieve any given environmental standard at the lowest national cost. Even when the standards were met, firms would still have incentives to look for ways of reducing pollution still further because they would be paying a fee on whatever residual pollutants remained. And again, most important, there would be strong incentives throughout industry for the continuing development of new technology of a pollution-reducing character.

Effluent charges are by no means the sole answer. Enough studies have been carried out on river basins to provide guidance on the magnitude of effluent charges needed to achieve particular water quality standards. But since we have had no experience with them they would have to be introduced gradually—you can't create a large new market overnight. Regulations are already in force and they cannot simply be junked—effluent charges would have to supplement the regulations at first, not replace them. Moreover, as we have stressed earlier, some exotic and highly dangerous chemical discharges will always have to be controlled by regulation rather than incentive. After all the qualifications, however, the potential role for an incentive-oriented approach is very large, and its absence very costly.

## Federal grant programs

**I**N THE FISCAL YEAR 1976, the federal government provided some \$60 billion in grants-in-aid to state and local governments. Of



that amount, \$23 billion went for welfare, Medicaid, and other forms of payments to individuals; there was \$14 billion in general revenue-sharing or broad bloc grants with few federal strings attached; and \$10 billion went for three large capital grants—highways, mass transit, and waste-treatment plants. The remaining \$13 billion was devoted to a very large number of relatively narrow categorical grants, under which the federal government specifies in some detail how the funds shall be used. Two kinds of problems characterize many of these categorical grants, both reflecting a lack of correspondence between the nature of the grant and the “market” failure it was supposed to correct.

The first problem arises from a failure to distinguish between two quite different social objectives. Starting about fifteen years ago, the federal government began to take on responsibility for assuring that the poor and the disadvantaged had access to certain critical services—health care, manpower training, day care, and the like. In many cases, existing institutions were very unsuited to the delivery of such services in poor urban or rural neighborhoods, and in other cases no institutions existed at all. Hence, it was necessary not only to provide the poor with financial resources to purchase such services, but also to create or improve the institutions which deliver them. In virtually all cases, the same grant was used for both purposes. In poor inner-city areas, where private physicians are scarce, neighborhood health centers are an attempt to provide a more attractive and effective alternative to the outpatient clinics of large city hospitals. Through grants, the federal government furnishes the operating funds for such centers, and their services are made available without charge to inner-city residents. But in doing so the program runs into major difficulties. In the first place, since the services are free (or require minimal fees), only the poor or near-poor are allowed to use them. This tends to create a two-class medical system. Second, the health centers do not have to stand the test of consumer acceptance—obviously, if they charge nothing they will be preferred to other sources of medical-care delivery that do charge. The federal government thus not only supports the initial establishment of such centers, but is permanently committed to supplying the annual operating funds, and hence to exerting continuing oversight.

If, on the other hand, the two objectives were recognized as being different, a more reasonable approach could be followed. Removing financial barriers to medical care for the poor could be accomplished by a system of medical insurance for the poor, either as a reform of the current Medicaid program or as part of a broader national health-

insurance system. In turn, after providing the seed money to help new institutions like neighborhood health centers get started, the federal government could gradually withdraw the operating funds and require the institutions to charge fees covering costs. This would be no hardship on the poor, since their medical bills would be covered by federally supported insurance. But the neighborhood health centers would then have to stand the test of the marketplace, since potential clients would be able to choose whether to use the centers or to buy their medical care elsewhere. It would not be necessary to limit the centers’ services to the poor, since everyone would be paying fees covering costs.

At least on an experimental basis, similar principles could be applied in other areas. If vouchers for manpower-training programs were available to eligible recipients, government-sponsored and private training programs could compete for clientele. A similar approach could be applied to day-care centers. The same principle suggests concentrating federal support for higher education on direct assistance to students rather than on subsidies to colleges.

## Failure to consider incentive problems

**A**CROSS A WIDE RANGE of areas, social intervention often fails, not because it relies unnecessarily on regulation or other command-and-control devices, but because in other ways it ignores the role of properly structured economic incentives for achieving social goals. Sometimes this takes the form of social programs which themselves set up perverse and antisocial incentives. Sometimes it takes the form of failing to recognize how existing institutions channel private economic activity in the wrong direction.

Distorted pricing and incentives play a major role in creating urban problems. Virtually every city has a long-range development plan. But every one of them is imposed on a structure of investment incentives which invariably frustrates the objectives of the plan. We have already seen the congestion consequences of failure to charge motorists the full social costs of their commuting. Most cities set prices on sewer and water services which do not properly reflect the cost of installing sewer and water lines for new developments. Leap-



frogging and urban sprawl are in effect subsidized, since longer lines carry no higher charges than close-in services. Profits from buying and holding land for speculation are taxed at capital gains rates, which are far lower than the normal tax rates paid on ordinary income from property improvements. Scarce entrepreneurial talent is channeled into land speculation. The after-tax gains from a combination of buying land and then securing favorable variances in the zoning code are much greater than from the socially desirable alternative of investing in property improvements under existing zoning. Given a limited access to capital, the investor in inner-city residential property gets a high return by extensive purchases of older property to hold, with improvements, against land-price escalation and capital-gains taxation. Applying the same funds to property improvements would yield income in the form of rents which are taxed at the higher tax rates of ordinary income.

One cannot prove the existence of a behavioral law or tendency simply by reciting examples. And yet I think it is clear that we do limit the politically acceptable techniques for social intervention to a few predetermined approaches, and usually block out of our vision that class of alternatives which uses marketlike principles to achieve social objectives.

We try to specify in detail the particular actions that generate social efficiency and then command their performance. But in complex areas of human behavior, neither our imagination nor our commands are up to the task. We often see the causes of market failure at superficial levels—a physical shortage of mass-transit facilities, municipal treatment plants, or local health clinics—and, instead of dealing with the root behavioral problem, try to build over it with construction grants. Instead of widening the area of individual choice for the poor and the disadvantaged by financial and institutional arrangements which give them alternative opportunities in day care, manpower training, health facilities, and the like, we tie the financing and the institutions together in a way which minimizes their range of choice. Consistently, where social problems arise because of distorted private incentives, we try to impose a solution without remedying the incentive structure. And, equally consistently, the power of that incentive structure defeats us.

If I am right that we tend to intervene in ways that are systematically biased in certain directions, then by definition the problem is not one of random error, or incompetence of legislators and administrators. There must be some underlying reasons in the structure of our beliefs or our political systems for us to act the way we do.

## Self-interest and social action

**T**HE BIAS IN THE American political system, to intervene through direct determination of outputs by regulation and other forms of centralized bureaucracy, is deep-seated. There are, I think, several major causes of that bias, none of which can be changed by some simple modification of the political process.

If one accepts the views of James Buchanan and some of his colleagues in the public-choice school of political economy, only a radical constitutional revision that severely restricts the scope of allowable social intervention can deal with the problem. His is a very deterministic view—people vote only their pocketbooks, are exceedingly myopic about their own long-run interests, and inevitably end up voting for excessive government and output-oriented intervention. Normative economics, which tries to spell out some “desirable” course of action to correct market failures, is quite irrelevant in view of the way voters actually behave.

In my judgment, this picture of the political process is far too narrow. People and legislators do vote their self-interest, particularly on matters which affect them starkly and directly. But they also have some views about the public good, quite apart from immediate effects upon themselves. People who vote against gun control and for a large defense budget, capital punishment, and balanced budgets at all times are not simply trying to maximize their own economic gains.

Politics can be, in some part at least, a creative process, not simply a deterministic response to the myopic self-interest of majorities or special-interest groups. There is still room for normative economic judgments, based on an analysis of market failure. Trying to discern the underlying causes for the output-oriented bias of existing social intervention can be a worthwhile task as the first step in an active political process.

There is virtually no act of social intervention which does not impose losses on some people. Pollution control will reduce profits for some firms, in most cases temporarily, but in particular instances permanently. Should outmoded transportation regulations be removed, the resulting reshuf-



fling of the transportation system would bring losses to firms which were protected under the old system and to some communities whose value as shipping centers was sustained by artificially rigged transport rates.

An efficient social action will generate gains that exceed losses. In theory, therefore, the gainers from efficient social intervention could fully compensate the losers and still come out ahead. With no losers and some net gainers, the political obstacles to efficient social intervention would be minimized. The potentially divisive struggle over income distribution could be divorced from the problem of efficiency. The difficulties of designing efficient instruments of social intervention would be solely technical in nature. While technical problems could still be formidable, and in the face of uncertainty require some nice judgments, a major roadblock to efficient social intervention would be removed.

In fact, of course, it is impossible in most situations to identify gainers and losers, to measure the size of their gains and losses, and to devise means of transferring income from gainers to losers by means which themselves do not interfere with efficiency. If a steel company responds to pollution controls by closing down some of its older coke ovens and building a new coke-oven complex, workers in the coke ovens that were closed will have to find new jobs. If, after only a short period of searching, they find jobs at undiminished wages, and at nearby locations, their losses are small. But suppose they find employment only at lower wages, or only after incurring the expense of commuting fifty miles a day? How do we identify the short- and long-term losses when the outcome is likely to be different for each worker? What about the loss in tax revenue and retail trade in a one-factory community? And suppose the steel company shifts its purchase of coking coal from Kentucky mines to Pennsylvania mines?

Sometimes it is the problem of identifying the gainers and their gains which takes center stage. Decontrolling domestic oil prices, and letting them move to equality with world oil prices, would promote efficiency. Imports are the residual source of oil supply. With domestic prices held below the world market as they are now, domestic consumption of petroleum is encouraged. Consumers currently make decisions based on the blended market price of oil, about \$10 a barrel, but each added barrel of consumption costs the nation \$14 to import, a \$4 loss on every added barrel. Setting prices free to seek world market levels, however, would create a huge windfall to domestic producers with low-cost wells. If we knew the costs of production

at each well, we could levy a tax well by well that still provided a generous return while capturing the windfall. But we cannot devise such a precisely calibrated tax. And without precise calibration, excessive taxes on high-cost wells would discourage domestic production and exploration. The upshot is that policies designed to promote an efficient energy program become hopelessly enmeshed in quarrels about income distribution.

Even if we had reached some broad political consensus on "fair shares" and an appropriate overall income distribution, and had installed a system of progressive taxes and transfer payments to achieve it, efficiency measures would still be plagued by income distribution problems. The overall distribution measures might ensure, for example, that no one would fall below the poverty line, and that generous unemployment compensation would be available for those temporarily out of work. But what about the fifty-year-old employee in a paper factory earning \$15,000 per year, who is forced to settle for an \$8,000-a-year job as a result of an environmental decision that shut his factory down? Or the owner of a small trucking company whose lifetime savings are destroyed when the transportation regulations that protected his firm from widespread competition are removed? Establishing a reasonably egalitarian distribution of income by income classes does not eliminate severe losses or sharp gains to individuals as a consequence of social measures to improve efficiency.

## "Do no direct harm"

**I**NCOMES AND PROPERTY values are constantly being created and destroyed in the normal course of the economic changes that characterize a dynamic economy. But social attitudes toward losses are much more rigid when it comes to losses directly imposed by government action. The rule of "Do no direct harm" is a powerful force in shaping the nature of social intervention.

We put few obstacles in the way of a market-generated shift of industry to the South or the substitution of synthetic fibers for New England wools, events which generate large losses to individuals, firms, and communities. But we find it extra-



ordinarily difficult to close a military base or a post office. We have elaborate procedures for changing zoning regulations and provide case-by-case adjudication where losses in property values may occur. But movements of private industry that destroy property values occur at will. When we intervene through regulation, we try to write the regulations and provide administrative discretion to take care of as much individual variation in circumstances as possible, so as to prevent harm that can be immediately imputed to the regulation. Such regulations then grow at an exponential pace as experience in a far-flung economy steadily generates thousands of specific problems. More importantly, efficient ways of achieving results are often precluded because of a fear of some direct losses.

Any change brings losses to some. And however much we try to avoid large direct losses, there are always indirect losses as the effects of various policies work their way through the economy. But the extent of governmental moves to improve efficiency is sharply constrained, and the design of those moves importantly limited by attempts to follow the "Do no direct harm" rule. Because incentive-oriented approaches to social intervention rely on decentralized reactions to prices, they seem to remove from government the control of case-by-case results. If nothing else, this would make legislators nervous. They would have to forego the opportunity to hedge their programs about with all sorts of adjudication procedures drawn up to take care of specific losses. They would also forfeit the opportunity to second-guess administrators and to provide services for constituents through intervention in administrative decisions.

In the abstract there may seem to be no logic in our schizoid view of losses—allowable for purposes of efficiency in private markets, much less permissible for government actions. In fact, there is a historical rationale for our attitudes. The constitutional structures of most Western democracies arose as a response not to political anarchy but to the excessive power of monarchs. In the process, governmental power was not simply transferred from monarch to parliament or congress, but hedged about with safeguards. Protecting the rights of individuals in their property, as well as in their persons, against the arbitrary exercise of power by government was a dominant concern not only in framing constitutions and bills of rights, but in designing any subsequent legislation which conferred particular powers upon government. That economic change might impose severe losses on specific individuals was a fact of life, as were hurricanes and floods. Until the Great Depression they were not usually the subject of politics. What was

to be prevented was the imposition of losses by government.

Where government was called upon to act, it was natural, in this environment, to write laws that specified the allowable actions in detail. And, as the complexity of the situations to be regulated grew, regulations were increasingly accompanied by various adjudicatory provisions, quasijudicial bodies, administrative hearings, and other devices to adjust governmental actions to individual circumstances. Making law is still considered the province of lawyers. Some 55 to 60 percent of the members of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives have a legal background. Legal training necessarily, and quite rightly, concentrates on the specification of rights and duties in law and judicial precedent and on the case-by-case adjudication of individual situations in the light of the law and the precedents. When society decides that the social behavior ought to be changed, the lawyer goes about the task by setting forth the particular rights and duties of the parties involved, including the rights and duties of government. By the very nature of the process, the protection of individual equities is a large consideration. A market approach, on the other hand, stresses not rights and duties but incentives. People or firms act in certain ways because their self-interest dictates doing so, given the existing set of incentives. Changes in social behavior can be accomplished by modifying the incentives that induce people to act. Individual equities are not a principal concern.

Where market failures can be handled by changes in the laws concerning property—for example, through improvements in the assignment of liability for side effects—the rights-and-duties approach is an efficient one. But carrying over the rights-and-duties approach to situations which demand much more complex forms of social intervention tends to produce output-oriented legislation—detailed regulation of outcomes accompanied by adjudicatory procedures to handle individual cases. In an age when government was not expected to intervene significantly in the marketplace, the problem was not very significant. But as both economic circumstances and public attitudes have changed to bring about a much wider sphere of social intervention, the carry-over of the legal approach takes on much greater importance.

Paradoxically, therefore, the historical development has come full circle. The underlying principle that government shall do no direct harm and the legislative technique of carefully specifying rights and duties was—in part, at least—an outgrowth of the movement to limit the power of government. But by applying the principle and the technique



to situations in which social intervention must be pervasive and continuing, we have ended up extending the sphere of detailed governmental control far beyond what is necessary to accomplish the objectives we seek.

In the attempt to follow the "Do no direct harm" principle, we have also begun to transfer more and more decisions about individual economic equities from the market to the government. Regulations, however detailed, cannot be written to cover all the individual situations that arise. The prevention of direct harms is pursued by incorporating some broad standards of "fairness" in the legislation and providing individual rights of access to administrative hearing bodies and the courts for purposes of adjusting the regulations to individual circumstances. The legislation which gives EPA the task of setting detailed effluent limits also requires the EPA administrator to determine what is "economically achievable" and to take into account such things as "the age of equipment and facilities" (which necessarily varies from one firm to another). The determination of specific outcomes, and the fortunes of particular firms and communities, begins to be made on a case-by-case basis by the specific decisions of regulators, by administrative hearing panels, and by the courts—often by all three in sequence.

The application of general rules to individual circumstances through judicial interpretation is a vital and necessary part of governance. But too much of a good thing spoils the whole process. The toughest challenge to the political consensus necessary to keep a free society together arises when society itself has to make explicit decisions about the fate of particular groups and local communities. A large part of those kinds of decisions are now made by the market; government is not to blame for the outcome. Each economic change that produces efficiency does not have to be weighed on the scales against individual equities. As the volume of such decisions to be made by government grows, the strain put upon the political fabric grows at least proportionately. Every decision imposes a felt loss, either on those who want the regulation enforced rigorously or those who suffer its consequences. And the fact of loss can be directly attributed to a specific government decision. The result is probably that we get the worst of both worlds—many efficient moves are avoided because of the fear of being blamed for losses, while the anger and frustration over the losses that inevitably do occur are directly focused on an identifiable governmental decision.

A second consequence of our current approach is that more and more economic decisions are

made neither by the Executive nor the Legislative branches of government, but by individual judges. In determining, case by case, whether particular regulatory decisions are compatible with the standards set forth in the legislation, the courts must determine what is an "economically achievable" effluent limitation or what variation in limitations should be allowed for the "age of equipment and facilities." The exceedingly complicated calculus of comparing benefits and costs, which the market and its feedback mechanisms carry out, is supplanted only in part by central regulatory bodies with their staffs of technical experts. It is also replaced by the decisions of countless individual judges, struggling under rapidly growing workloads. To deal with these cases, the courts have little technical assistance and must rely upon technical content of adversary briefs. As a means of adjudicating matters of personal and property rights, the adversary process has major advantages. But it is a poor replacement for making highly complex economic policy.

There are, in summary, solid grounds for the historical emphasis on "Do no direct harm" as a principle and the specifications of rights and duties as a technique in spelling out the legitimate role of government. But its application to the newer forms of social intervention required by an increasingly interdependent society yields an output-oriented, command-and-control approach to social intervention which is not only inefficient, but productive of far more intrusive government than is necessary.

## Changing attitudes

**R**EPLACING CURRENT command-and-control techniques with marketlike instruments will have to be done gradually. But not much thought has been given to the design of dynamic strategies which, step by step, mesh a slowly decreasing reliance on regulations with a cautiously increasing use of market instruments. Insofar as economists are concerned, let us not cast too much blame upon politicians for refusing to accept our marvelous instruments of efficiency.

When new forms of social intervention are being considered, we start with a more or less clean



blackboard. We don't have to erase an existing maze of command-and-control laws. But a different kind of problem then confronts us—impatience. Major political initiatives only come after the public has been persuaded that an important problem exists. Public interest groups concerned with the problem begin to convince more and more people that something must be done. The issue is taken up on the political hustings by candidates and parties. A sense of urgency develops. After a sharp struggle, enough opposition is overcome to put together an effective majority. After the public has been persuaded that a "critical" problem exists, it is exceedingly hard to put before them a ten-year plan for gradually developing a new market structure. The inevitable response is to enact highly ambitious legislation stipulating sharp and immediate results, and then to erode the regulations piecemeal with postponements and loopholes as the inevitable problems develop. The very rhetoric and political process that gets us to the point where something can be done often puts us in a position where what is done is done poorly. This line of thought points to a more general set of political difficulties that hinder efficient and effective social action.

The American political system has been a marvelously effective tool for providing both freedom and governance. Its institutions have been well suited for generating the compromises and accommodations about major issues of national policy needed in a large and heterogeneous society. But those institutions were particularly designed to settle issues of large value conflicts.

As the areas for social intervention have become more complicated, however, and particularly as social intervention is required to influence the decisions of millions of individuals and business firms, the critical questions increasingly involve choices which have a much lower ideological and ethical content. Issues will still, of course, arise where for economic or social reasons we may want deliberately to move some area of decision-making completely out of the market and into the sphere of specified rights and duties. And the necessity will remain to form political battle lines around the very real question of whether or not to intervene. We cannot abandon the standard techniques and institutions for forming consensus and negotiating compromises among groups with widely different values. But how does an ingrained political process, which stresses value adjustments, come to grips with a world in which the critical decisions are increasingly ones of choosing among highly complicated alternatives? And, to make it even more difficult, how do we adapt when the very political techniques which themselves move society toward a

decision make it difficult to pursue workable techniques of intervention? Identifying heroes and villains, imputing values to technical choices, stressing the urgency of every problem, promising speedy results, and offering easily understandable solutions which specify outputs and rights—all of these are the common techniques of the political process whereby consensus is formed and action taken.

There is no obvious answer to this dilemma. The suggestion that the political debate be confined to ends while technicians and experts design the means, once the ends have been decided, is facile and naive. Ends cannot be separated from means. The two cannot and should not be separated. In the real world they are inextricably joined—we formulate our ends only as we debate and consider the particular means of satisfying them. No electorate or politician can afford to turn over the crucial question of how social intervention is to be designed to supposedly apolitical experts.

There is no instrumental solution to the dilemma. The only available course is a steady maturing of both the electorate and political leaders. How to intervene, when we choose to do so, is ultimately a political issue. I am convinced that the economic and social forces which flow from growth and affluence will continue to throw up problems and attitudes which call for intervention of a very complex order. How we handle those questions will not only determine the success we have in meeting particular problems, but cumulatively will strongly influence the political and social fabric of our society. Even if it were politically possible—which it is not—we cannot handle the dilemma by abjuring any further extension of interventionist policies. But equally, we cannot afford to go on imposing command-and-control solutions over an ever-widening sphere of social and economic activity. I believe—indeed I have no choice but to believe—that the American people can intelligently deal with issues when they are drawn in hues more subtle than black and white. Indeed, the political winds of the last few years can be read as a sign that the electorate is somewhat ahead of many of its political leaders. The voters are not disillusioned with government per se. But they are fed up with simple answers to complicated problems. They are ready, I think, for a more realistic political dialogue. Almost two centuries ago the arguments for the ratification of the Constitution were laid out in the Federalist Papers—perhaps the most sophisticated effort at political pamphleteering in history. Surely today's voters can accept the same high level of political argument as the farmers, mechanics, and politicians of the eighteenth-century colonies. ■



# There's good reason why people believe Captain Kidd buried his treasure in Nova Scotia.



where you can lie a'bed and hear the waves fighting the shore.

Nova Scotia is an old civilization. We invite you to come and share it for awhile. For information about everything that's going on, and where to stay, and what to do, write: Tourism, Box 130, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Or call us:

800-341-6096 *Toll free, for sure.*

A last word about Captain Kidd.

Some treasure, reputedly his, has been found. Too bad, perhaps. For ours is a land of myths and mysteries.

The stuff of dreams.

JUST for a moment, put yourself in Captain Kidd's place. For concealing a treasure trove, you look for: Hidden coves. Sandy beaches. And bright, sunny days; for a good view around.

That's Nova Scotia. Today, with direct flights, much easier to get to. Come to Nova Scotia and be rejuvenated. Clear your head. Discover the potency of fresh, sea-washed air. Indulge yourself in a little timelessness.

Bring your golf clubs and tennis racket if you want to maintain your edge. You're not all out fishing; not all the time. You can drive to the coast and swim or the shore. You can stroll outdoors and watch the birds fly over the sea.

Welcome into hotels, resorts, motels. Or try a week, on a farm; a real working farm by the sea,



## NOVA SCOTIA



Ocean playground of Atlantic Canada



# asked our creative people: Why use print?

By Carolyn Hixon  
Chairman, Leo Burnett Creative  
Department, U.S.A.



Worrying that I might be as retarded as the rest of the advertising industry regarding print and its creative possibilities, perhaps because I had been a vice president too long, I went into the kitchen and talked to the cooks. I queried the entire Leo Burnett Creative Department, asking:

**"When and why do you like using print?"**

Here is a sampling of answers, some of them matter-of-fact, others innovative and a few downright mystical:

**"Nothing brands like print."**

**"When the product has a print soul."**

**"When my copy runneth over."**

**"When the television legals are after me."**

**"When I want complete control over production of the finished advertisement."**

**"When I need a touch of class (because television seems to make all things common)."**

**"When a very simple idea can be posterized."**

**"It's a terrible burden to have to persuade someone in 30 seconds."**

**"When I want to touch the conscience of my audience."**

**"When you can't even recite the strategy in 30 seconds."**

**"When you're selling hearing aids."**

**"You can choose your company in print but not in television because networks have neutral personalities."**

To know about print it helps to know about print writing and print writers (print art directors, too). A print-chromosomed copywriter has a second sight into his\* medium. He understands that out there between all those pages are creative opportunities of cosmic proportions, but worries that everyone is too mind-set or chicken to try them.

These are some of the things he knows:

What a magazine does best is surround us with beloved objects, and information on how to use them, so that reading a magazine we become like gleeful little kids. This is the mood in which the print writer can court us—full of lovely, selfish feelings and wanting intimate things to be divulged.

Gentleness is a virtue, subtlety a persuasive tool in print. Ideas we privately approve but seldom recommend for TV because they lack bite or grab often flower profitably in some quiet meadow of print, soliciting the reader with sweet reasonableness and sanity.

Many products simply don't come to life within 30 seconds; not that they are complicated and need explaining, but because they exist on a grander scale and must be perceived longer. Anything less amounts to *lèse-majesté* and fails to express their inherent drama.

Besides being expansive in print, you can be baroque, grappling reader to ad with dozens of Lilliputian attractions. This is an exclusive property of print. In the hands of a gifted copywriter (and art director) it is worth a dozen finely focused commercials.

Psychologically, print writing is tougher than television writing. An artful presentation won't postpone the ash can, nor is there a collective responsibility shelter for the many collaborators on the finished product, should disaster strike. Don't look for genetic help from the director or copywriter. Don't expect lucky accidents on the set. The author and his cosmic side are naked and vulnerable—music by side in the harsh light of advertisement. Print writing stands side by side with the conference room. Many judgmental writers have a built-in bias towards television, but career tracks will be different in this medium.

Most beguiling, however, is the blinkered bias of an evolving industry believing their own hype. Here some of the swifter and smarter are now spent largely on non-broadcast. The biggest budgets are in advertising today should even exclusively, to a large extent, be in print. A creative agency like Leo Burnett, where many of our greatest case histories have been and will continue to be printed, is intensive.

Finally, I see by the pages of the newest business school dialogue explaining the role of advertising for the economy champions the out in the profession (double take!) sophisticated distributes information try. Surely which they would not otlevel of po-and thereby decreases alics, and pol-monopoly power. So as es. and still senior informers/MAY 1977 I think we'd better t through again.

\*Or her, as the case may be.



# WAR STORIES

by Robert Stone

ON THE DAY Holliwell left for Central America, his wife had volunteered to arrange the weekend outing of a brilliant young paranoid. Holliwell's wife as a Master of Social Work at the state hospital. Before seven, she drove the girls to school and went on to the facility to pick up the paranoid and conduct him home to his nervous parents in the suburbs of Wilmington.

Holliwell finished his packing alone; he and his wife had taken leave of each other during the night. When his bag was locked and standing by the front door, he went into the kitchen and made himself a strong Bloody Mary. He drank it by the living-room window, looking out at the front yard, where his magnolia and his mountain ash stood somnolent under the mild brown winter.

She was a little bit in love with this one, Holliwell thought—and the man was unquestionably dangerous. But she would almost certainly be all right. She was very sensible.

His plane left from Kennedy the following morning, and he planned to pass the day in New York, first lunching with Marty Nolan, then checking into his favorite hotel to see what the evening might bring. He no longer knew anyone who lived in the city. At four or five, he would phone his wife to make sure that everything had gone well.

He finished the first drink and then had another, not bothering with breakfast. By the time he put his suitcase in the back of the car if he was high enough to stop at the shop in town and buy his first pack of cigarettes in a month. Driving to the turnpike, he smoked one cigarette after another.

Like the road to the pike—like the road his wife drove to Wilmington—ran through pine and swamp. Each time he passed over a road or the still course of a creek dividing land of pine from another, the picture would come into his mind of his wife lying

at night.  
arm. C

dead in the woods, her red-and-white scarf knotted round her neck in a thin line, her bloodied fingers stiffening across a log.

After the turnpike entrance, he hit the radio and in a mile or two WWVA eased down from space selling lucky crosses and Christian good fortune. Holliwell tuned it in carefully and between commercials heard a singular musical recitation, delivered in up-country dialect, about a young football player.

The youth on the record was his high school's star quarterback; it was the big game against the school in the next hollow, and at half time the home team was a couple of touchdowns behind. During the half, the boy disappeared from the locker room, and he was late returning for the third quarter.

"Where in the hell you been?" demanded the anxious hometown coach, who was decent but hard. He swore at the boy and shoved him toward the line of scrimmage.

There then commenced an astonishing display of unforgettable schoolboy ball. The kid played like a young man possessed, and the fans in the little country-and-western town had never seen the like of him. The opposition was devastated, the coach awestruck and penitent. Amid the jubilation outside the showers, he drew the young quarterback quietly aside.

"Coach," the youth explained, "my father was blind."

The boy's father had been blind, and for a week had lain upon his deathbed. The boy had been phoning the hospital regularly, and during half time had learned of his father's death.

The coach cleared his throat. How then to explain the spectacle only just witnessed—the sixty-yard touchdown passes, the seventy-yard scoring runs?

"You see, coach," the boy said quietly, "it's the first time he's ever seen me play."

By the time WWVA faded out, Holliwell

*Robert Stone is the author of Dog Soldiers.*



was aware of the tears streaming down his face, staining his tie, wetting his moustache and the stub of his cigarette. He eased the Volvo into the next turnoff, and sat, with the motor running, staring through the windshield at a row of green refuse cans until he had stopped sobbing.

So much for morning drinking. An hour-and-a-half from home and he already had an anecdote for his wife, one that would engage her sympathy and attention, one to save for his return home—providing, of course, that both of them returned alive.

We're getting pretty shaky, he told himself, wiping the foolish tears from his face with a Kleenex. It was being forty, marriage, soft suburban living.

She gets tougher and smarter, he thought, and I get shaky—a pattern of class and culture. Perhaps he might tell her about the country song but not about his breaking up at the wheel.

In the woods beyond the paved rest area and the green garbage cans, a young black man in city clothes was carrying a paper parcel toward the road. He saw the parked Volvo with Holliwell at the wheel and turned quickly back into the maze of pines. Holliwell sighed, put the car in gear, and rolled back onto the turnpike, headed for lunch and New York.

An hour later, he was crossing the Narrows bridge; the harbor and the Manhattan skyline were bright with January sunshine, and the city wind unseasonably soft and full of promises. Holliwell's spirits had lifted in the wastes of Bayonne; except for a palpable desire for more alcohol, he felt that he was doing fairly well. It would be a drinking day—the morning stirrup cup had set off an old mechanism. But his habits had become so generally moderate that it seemed to him he could afford some reasonable indulgence in the field.

He took the Belt Parkway northward and fought his way into the traffic around the Kings County Courthouse. He had not been to Brooklyn for years, and being there gave him the mild elation that came with a new and unfamiliar town. The restaurant was on Court Street; it had valet parking and a few sumac trees out back, and he found it on the first pass. He brushed the cigarette ashes from his jacket, put his suitcase in the trunk, and handed the keys to a uniformed Puerto Rican attendant.

McDermott's was the name of the place, three huge rooms of cut glass, oak, and dusty ceiling fans. McDermott's, Holliwell decided, was great fun—and when he thought back on the business later it seemed to him that it was largely the prospect of dining in downtown

Brooklyn that had persuaded him to lunch with Marty Nolan in the first place.

A CAPTAIN IN A tuxedo escorted him among the seated landlords and deputy inspectors, leading him to a round table on which reposed a half-finished Martini and a rumpled paisley napkin. He ordered a Martini for himself and admired the huge mirrors on the paneled walls. The drink had arrived, and Holliwell was taking his first sip when he saw Marty Nolan step out of the Gents in the next salon and proceed nearsightedly across the hall.

As Marty walked, his left hand absentmindedly brushed an area below the belt of his double-knit trousers; he was checking to see if his fly was unbuttoned. When he saw Holliwell, his round face brightened. Holliwell stood up to shake hands with him.

"Herr Professor," Marty Nolan said.

His hand was damp, his thick horn-rimmed glasses seemed almost about to scream, and although it was not at all hot in McDermott's, there was a line of perspiration below the line of his fair curly hair.

"Good to see you, Marty," Holliwell said.

It would be possible, he thought, to describe Nolan as fastidious—yet there was always something faintly gross about the man, the suggestion of unwholesome secrets.

Nolan raised his glass and they drank.

"I'm delighted that you made the time for lunch. I'm honored."

"Not at all," Holliwell said. "I looked forward to it."

He was privy to a few of Marty Nolan's secrets. One was that, during the Tet offensive, the Vietcong forces who overran Hue had buried him alive, and he had lain in the earth half-conscious for six hours until a party of German medical missionaries dug him out.

And on one occasion, Holliwell, visiting from the Central Highlands, had found a manuscript sheet in Nolan's portable typewriter with a single sentence at the top of the page, and the sentence had read: "The Jew at home in the modern world." Whether or not this was a libel depended entirely upon one's sense and experience of the modern world—but the business about "the Jew" was distinctly sinister. Can of worms there, Holliwell had thought.

But his ties to Nolan were old and strong. They had both gone to Regis in the Fifties—it was a Jesuit high school that took in the smartest kids from the city's parochial grade schools. They had both been released into the 1960s from prestigious secular universities.



They had both been to Vietnam in their government's service.

Marty was peering over his glasses at the room in which they sat.

"I'm in transports of Brooklyn nostalgia," he told Holliwell. "I come from Bay Ridge, you remember."

"Of course I remember. What brings you up here? I thought you worked down in Washington."

"Oh yeah," Marty said, "in the Washington area. I'm visiting my mother."

Holliwell inquired after Marty Nolan's mother, wondering if he had ever married and whether or not to ask.

"Mom's okay. She gets around."

"Well, it's a great place, this," Holliwell said. "It's really old Brooklyn."

They ordered more Martinis, a bottle of barbarousse. Holliwell asked for a steak and salad, Nolan the veal piccata.

"Did you know," Nolan asked, as a waiter opened the wine, "that Paul Robeson died this morning?"

"I thought he died in Russia about ten years ago."

"This morning," Nolan said. His eyes flashed thick whimsy which Holliwell remembered very clearly from the past. "It was on the radio."

"Well," Holliwell said, cutting his steak, "I hardly know how to react."

"I wasn't trying to goad you to malicious satisfaction, Frank. Everybody dies. It just

brings back old times. I'd like to go to his funeral."

"You mean officially?"

"Don't be ridiculous. I'd just like to go. To see it."

"Think the FBI will be there? Taking everybody's picture?"

"I wouldn't think so. But who knows with those guys?"

Holliwell, chewing his steak became aware of Marty's eyes on him again.

"How's your life, Frank? Quiet desperation? Self-fulfillment?"

Holliwell nodded and finished chewing.

"Last month," he told Nolan, "my oldest daughter burned herself slightly. It was the winter solstice, and she was jumping over a log with her boyfriend."

"Is that the way they get married now?"

Holliwell poured them both some Barbarousse.

"How about you, Marty? Ever get married?"

"I was married in Nam, didn't you know that? In the Saigon cathedral."

"It must have been after I left. What's the lady like?"

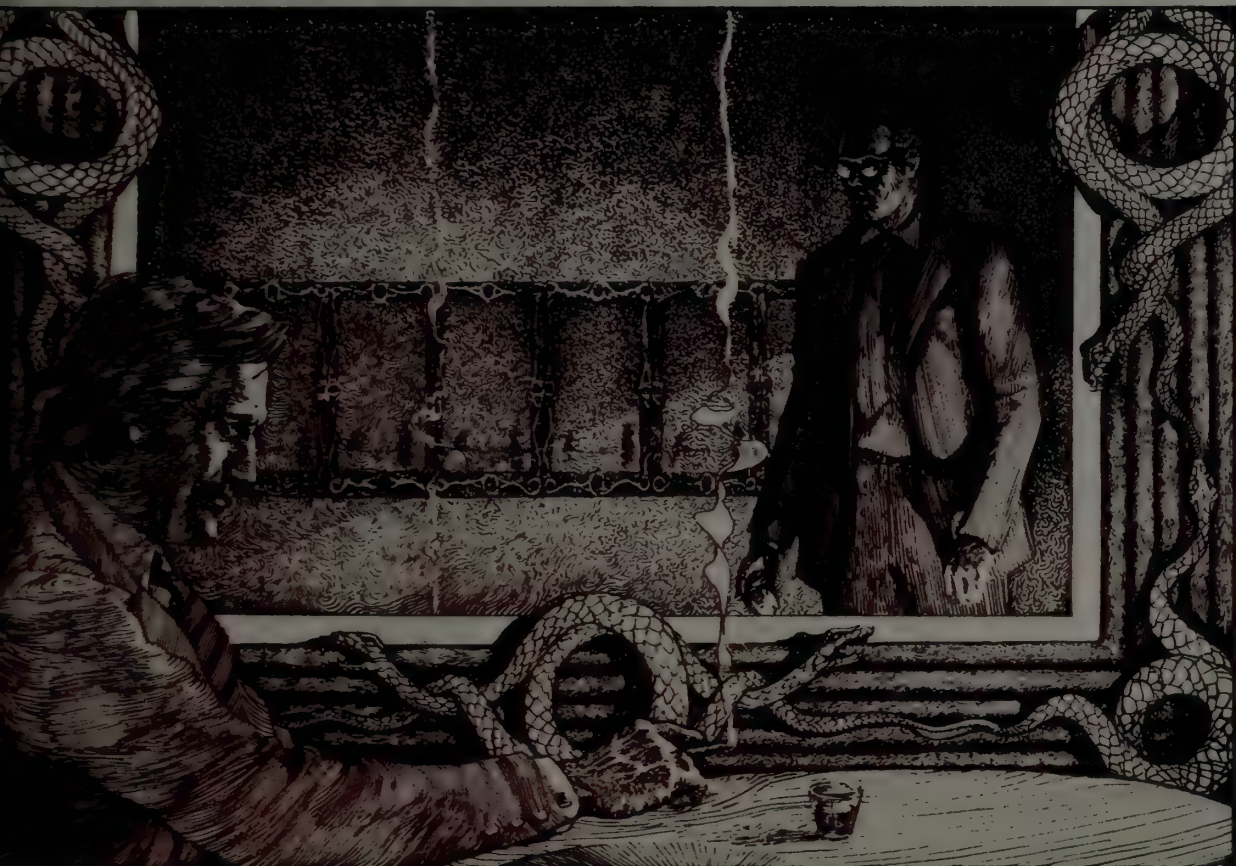
"Neat," Marty said.

Holliwell found himself touched. "Is she Vietnamese?"

"Worcester. We're separated now. We don't have any kids."

Holliwell nodded to convey comprehension, sympathy, whatever might be called for.

**"We're at a very primitive stage of mankind. That's what people don't understand. Just pick up the *Times* on any given day and you've got a catalogue of ape behavior."**





"And you," Nolan said. "You're off to Compostela for a little something different."

"I fiddled it. I invited my friends at the university down there to invite me. How did you come to hear about it?"

"I had a letter from Oscar Ocampo. He said you'd be coming down."

Holliwell realized then that there would be a pitch. He must, he thought, have realized all along that there would be one. But it would not disturb him, he decided; it was part of a game, an artifact of his friendship with Nolan, a little fencing between gentlemen. Neither of them would take it too seriously.

"How come Oscar's writing to you? I thought he was a leftist."

"Sure he's a leftist. But we're not enemies. We have a dialogue going."

Oscar Ocampo was a government anthropologist with a sinecure in the university at Compostela, a gambler and a great womanizer. Holliwell had always known him to be a passionate sympathizer with revolution.

"Oscar and I used to have some great arguments," Holliwell said. Apparently Oscar had stopped arguing. They had turned him—either with money or the offer of a job in the States. It was a shame, Holliwell thought, and Oscar must feel very bad about it.

"I suppose," Holliwell said, "that in a couple of years you'll be asking me to get him a job up here."

"Frank—how about doing us a favor while you're down there?"

Holliwell buttered some French bread and said what he had decided he would say.

"If you approach me with something like that, Marty, I'm supposed to publicize the approach. My professional association passed a resolution against doing favors for you guys."

"Your professional association," Marty Nolan said humorously, "is a bunch of long-haired disorderly persons. Pinkos, Frank. Red rats."

"All anthropologists are brothers," Holliwell said.

"Suppose I ask how you voted on that resolution?"

Holliwell put his bread down and set his fork beside it.

"I abstained. I was in favor of the resolution, but I felt compromised. Because of what I did in Nam. The favors."

"God," Marty said soberly. "You're an honest man, Frank."

"Well," Holliwell told him, "there it is. As they used to say. What do you hear from Ho Chi Minh City?"

Marty looked at him for a moment and finished his wine.

"Not much. They arrested the Hao Hoa. A lot of them were friends of ours and nobody bothered to get them out. Look—what can I say? You want to know if I'm bitter? I'm not. Neither am I repentant. The other guys fought hard, they earned it."

"If you were bitter I wouldn't blame you. You really came through the whole thing damn well."

Nolan put his own fork down. They had both stopped eating.

"What should I do—run for Congress? Get myself a tent show in Orange County—know the Red Terror Firsthand? I'll tell you something, Frank—the night they dug me out I was in a hospital compound with this old Catalan priest. The guy was walking up and down chain-smoking, and they'd had him under the ground longer than I was. He said to me, 'Hombre, this was nothing. They buried me alive in Murcia in '38, and it was a lot harder.'"

Holliwell laughed and shook his head.

"Frank," Marty Nolan said, "let me tell you about what's going on down south. No guarantee, you'll love it."

Holliwell shrugged; Nolan was leaning across the table at him, his eyes shining with good-natured conspiracy.

"Down in Tecan, on the east coast, even if we sit here—some of our countrymen find themselves in a state of social and spiritual crisis."

"Let's let them work it out for themselves," Holliwell said.

"All I want to know, Frank, is what they're really up to."

"Ask Oscar what they're up to—he's on the payroll, right? Speaking as an American taxpayer, I don't give a shit."

"Oh, Frank," Marty said. He sat back in his chair as though scandalized. "Information is a positive force. It furthers communication. It reduces isolation and clarifies motives. The more everybody knows about what everybody else is doing, the less misunderstanding there is in the world."

"I'm going to Compostela. I'm not setting foot in fucking Tecan. It's a rathole, and it gets on my conscience."

"Nonsense," Marty said, "it's a wonderful place. They have American-style hardware stores, and the President speaks English just like we do here on Court Street."

"And he's wonderful too?"

"He certainly is," Marty said. "He's a Rotarian."

"Marty," Holliwell said, looking around for the waiter, "get off my back. I'm not going there and I'm not doing you any favors."



# BUCCELLATI

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 Modesto Modesto  
 Stockton Stockton  
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 Bohm Allen Denver  
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**Oklahoma** Dawson's White Barn Stillwater

**Oregon** Friedlander & Sons Washington Square  
 Zell Brothers Portland  
**Pennsylvania** J. E. Caldwell Harrisburg, Haverford, Philadelphia, Plymouth Meeting  
 Hardy & Hayes Pittsburgh  
**Puerto Rico** Ambiance San Juan  
**South Carolina** Charles Kernison & Co. Charleston  
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When the waiter came near, Nolan ordered them both a stinger. A busboy took their unfinished lunches away.

"On the Caribbean coast of Tecan there's a little place the locals call Spanish Harbor. A couple of clicks down from Puerto Alvarado. For the last thirty years the American Devotionists have had a mission there, but they're on their last legs now and they want to close it down. The only people left there are a priest in his sixties and an American nursing nun. Now the Devotionists have been asked about this, and their provincial in New Orleans is being very cagey—but it seems that these characters won't come back."

The drinks arrived; Marty raised his glass in salute.

"There's a lot of medieval church diplomacy going on. The provincial says he'll cut off their funds but he hasn't. The priest and nun say they'll come back presently but they won't. Also the Tecanecan government has become aware of their presence and the Tecanecan government is extremely paranoid."

"And extremely murderous," Holliwell said.

"Okay," Marty said, "they're murderous troglodytes and we put them in. But there it is. The Tecanecans suspect that the two of them are somehow mixed up in subversive activities, but it hasn't got a line on them and it doesn't want a hassle with the church."

"And what do your sources say?"

"That these people are wrongos, Commies, et cetera. That's what they always say. You know, Tecan is a special situation—it's still the Fifties there. Our Ambassador is a Birchite moron. The cops lock you up for reading Voltaire."

"Another corner of the free world."

"Don't give me *faux-naïf* clichés, Frank. Save them for the meetings of your professional association, and someday they'll make you their president."

He finished his drink looking pained.

"Listen, old chap—I want to know what these people are up to. They're my compatriots and erstwhile coreligionists, and they're fucking with El Toro down there. Somebody may have to bail them out."

"I'm not going down there and spy on them."

"Spy on them? Are you crazy? They're already being spied on seven ways from sundown by people who'd love nothing more than to mess with their private parts."

Holliwell signaled for another pair of stingers.

"You're going to Compostela. It would be the easiest thing in the world for you to get a Tecanecan visa and check out Spanish Harbor. Go diving, go bonefishing. There's even an

Old Empire ruin a few miles from there you to scramble around. The thing is," he went on, before Holliwell could protest, "it's that wants to know about these people. I want so much the outfit as just me. And I'd like to get it—not from some informer or right-wing spook—but from somebody with some sensitivity. Somebody who could give me a real insight into what they think they're doing down there. You might be in a position to help *everybody* out."

"The last time I thought I was in that position things didn't work out very well."

"So what do you want? A perfect world? Tell me something, professor, have you stopped believing that people have to take sides?"

"No," Holliwell said. "People have to take sides."

"What side are you on, then? Do you really think the other guys are going to resolve all the special contradictions and make everything okay? Worker in the morning, hunter in the afternoon, scholar in the evening—do you really believe that's on, Frank?"

"No," Holliwell said.

"Well, it's them or us, chum. Like always. They make absolute claims, we make relative ones. That's why our side is better in the end."

"Is that what *you* believe?"

Marty shrugged. "Sure I believe it. You believe it too. Anyway I'm not recruiting you and it's not some kind of hostile operation. I told you what I wanted—just a little insight. It could be that we have something to learn from these two people in Tecan."

"Why don't you just write them a letter. Ask them what it is they want down there."

Nolan exhaled slowly and let his narrow shoulders sag.

"Give me a brandy," he told the waiter. "Two brandies." He turned from Holliwell and looked around the room, at the wainscoted ceilings and the dwindling crowd of heavy-faced, hard-eyed diners.

"Jesus, I picked this place because I thought the atmosphere might discourage moral posturing."

"It must be you and me, Marty. We're spoiling the atmosphere."

Nolan took his brandy without ceremony.

"This conversation depresses me," he said, "because it reminds me that we live in a land of total vindication. TV, TV or nothing. I mean twenty years ago we had the total vindication of William Jennings Bryan, a Father Flanagan and apple pie. Secularism," he made a little equals sign in the air with his fingers—"was Communism. Modernism was godlessness, Bolshevism. All the eggheads were Commie stooges, and you had to go to For-



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ham or Darlington, South Carolina, to find a loyal American. Then we get fucked up in Nam and Saigon falls and the whole card's reversed. Hiss didn't do it, the Rosenbergs didn't do it, nobody fucking did it, and Truman started the Cold War. Presently we'll find out that Trotsky was really a Japanese spy. Total vindication."

"Well," Holliwell said, "there's nothing like total vindication."

"Exactly. See, it's all a movie in this country and if you wait long enough you get your happy ending. Until somebody else's movie starts. In many ways it's a very stupid country."

"Are you trying the patriotic approach?"

"Hell, no," Nolan said, "the patriotic approach is out of date."

They sat drinking in silence for a while. When the check came, Holliwell moved it to his own side of the table and kept it there.

"We're at a very primitive stage of mankind," Nolan declared. "That's what people don't understand. Just pick up the *Times* on any given day and you've got a catalogue of ape behavior. Strip away the slogans and excuses and verbiage, the so-called ideology, and you're reading about what one pack of chimpanzees did to another."

Holliwell paid the check with his BankAmericard, and Nolan did not move to prevent him.

"Sorry," Holliwell said. "Not this time."

They walked to the front door together and stood beside the parking lot fence. The brisk wind raised whirls of dust from the sidewalk, and Nolan shielded his eyes with his right hand.

"When you're down there you may feel differently. So if I may, I'll ask you again through a third party."

Holliwell only smiled and they shook hands. It was not until he was halfway across the Brooklyn Bridge that the suggestion of a threat in Nolan's final words struck him, making him think of the man entombed beside the Perfume River, the involved observer of the modern world. A chill touched his inward loneliness. He was, he knew at that moment, really without beliefs, without hope—either for himself or for the world. Almost without friends, certainly without allies. Alone.

**W**E DROVE TOWARD Manhattan, facing the squat brutality of the new buildings that had gone up around the bridge; he was depressed and too drunk for safety. The drive uptown left him tired and anxious. Gratefully, he turned the Volvo keys over to the hotel doorman and,

once upstairs, ordered a bottle of Scotch from room service. When the drink arrived, he sat with his feet on the window sill looking out over the midtown rooftops. On a day in May he and Marty Nolan had once walked from the library on East Seventy-ninth Street the way down to the bridge and then across it, ending up in a bar on Clark Street. It would have been about 1955. Hour after hour, block after block of talk.

After a while, he moved over to the double bed, propped a pillow up behind him, and dialed his home number. When he heard his wife's voice on the line, he lit a cigarette.

"So you're okay," he said. "You got back all right."

"I told you not to worry. He had his medicine at the hospital. He was half zonked."

"So he didn't rave and carry on?"

"He slept. When we got to his house I didn't know where he was."

"Does he ever?"

"Sure. He's very aware."

"What were his parents like?"

"Very middle class. Quite well off, fancy house. They asked me in, but I didn't go. They'll drive him back."

"So that's that."

"Yep," she said.

"I had my lunch with Marty. We drank a lot."

"You sound like you've been drinking. What are you going to do with yourself now?"

Holliwell poured himself a little Scotch and ice water. In the blue sky beyond his window thin January clouds were speeding over Manhattan.

"Maybe I'll walk over to Eighth Avenue. For some \$20 fellatio."

"You're kidding, aren't you?"

"Yes," he said. "Of course."

"Well, I wish I was up there with you. And I wish I could go along."

"Marty told me that Paul Robeson just died."

"My God, was he gloating about it?"

"He was sort of gloating."

"Listen," she said. "Did he ask you to do any work for them?"

"He had something up his sleeve. I turned him down cold."

"Did you let him know you were mad at him?"

"I wasn't mad at him."

"I think they have a hell of a lot of nerve," she said.

"I love you," Holliwell told her. "Take care."

"I love you too. You take care too."

He sat on the edge of the bed, drinking st



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more whisky and thinking about his conversation with Nolan. Shortly he began to wonder what Marty had been writing in that hootch outside of Hue, what he had meant by the modern world and by being at home in it. And by "the Jew."

A great deal of profoundly fractured cerebration had gone down in Vietnam. People had been by turns fascist mystics, Communist revolutionaries, and junkies; at certain times, certain people had managed to be all three at once. It was the nature of the time—the most specious lunacy had been conceived, written, and enacted on both sides of the Pacific. Most of the survivors were themselves again, for what it was worth. No one could be held totally responsible for his utterances during that time.

The Jew was presumably the one spawned in that Antwerp estaminet, blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London. Holliwell knew him; his name was Sy, he had once run a newspaper stand on the corner of Dyckman Street and Broadway. Sy had lived almost across the hall from Holliwell and his mother in a cheap hotel in Washington Heights for ten years and Holliwell still half suspected that Sy had been his mother's lover. He had never asked.

For years, he had worked for Sy at the paper stand, and they had conducted a running discourse on the state of the world at mid-century. Holliwell had learned the words of the "Internationale" from Sy, but whenever Holliwell mentioned church or churchly things Sy would smile with lupine contempt.

"They pound that shit into your head. At that school you go to."

Sy was a Communist, he had been an organizer in the merchant marine during the war. Holliwell had found Sy's being a Communist appalling. He would bait Sy with the Hitler-Stalin pact, the Katyn massacre, forced-labor camps, the NKVD.

When the trucks brought bound, stacked papers to the curb, Sy would cut the twine from them with a sharpened knuckle-duster, baring his teeth at the red banner of Hearst's *Journal-American*.

"That school—they pound that shit into your head."

They would stand hunched over the stacks, in ink-stained aprons full of sweaty change, their backs to the ice-cold sour wind from the Bronx breweries.

"What do you know about the Soviet Union?" Sy would ask. "You ever been there?"

Stung, Holliwell would play his trump.

"What do I know about Germany and Auschwitz and like that? I never been there either."

Sy would stick his hands in his pea-coat pockets with the same wolfish grimace.

"Go ahead—be a Fascist. Be an anti-Semite. They pound that shit into your head."

But he was not at home in the modern world.

On one of his last visits to New York—had been a few years before—Holliwell had gotten drunk to the point of riotous indulgence and he had undertaken a sentimental journey uptown. He had found himself walking around Fort Tryon Park in the fading light, feeling perfectly safe, and everywhere he turned he had seen vistas that were part of his interior landscape, all the scenes of his early adventures, imaginary and real. Immediately, he had realized that the neighborhood had nothing to do with him anymore.

Then he had seen Sy on a bench along Broadway in a black overcoat too warm for the weather and a cloth cap out of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Sy had asked after his mother. "Alive?"

She was dead, Holliwell had told him. She had gone back to Glasgow on her Social Security and died there.

He had said to Sy: I thought you'd be in Florida.

And Sy had said, Forget Florida. The fucking animals, they hunt me on the street. They want to break down my door and put a rope around my neck. The scumbags, they ruined the neighborhood, they ruined the city. Fucking Lindsay.

His broken nose was sprouting gray whiskers. He was old unto death.

Then Sy had told him the story of Liss who ran the drugstore on Manhattan Avenue.

Liss the druggist. Retired, closed the store—he was robbed so often. Visiting his brother on the Concourse. In a car, he wouldn't dare walk. And the animals got him in his car. Just bang—fuck you, he's dead. The cops stop the car, they catch the animals, one animal confesses. But Liss, they put him in the city dump at Mott Haven—they don't remember where. The cops can't find him. The city says we can't find him, the dump's too big. A needle in a haystack. He's there now, under the garbage. A religious Jew. Nice for his family. A fucking dog you bury in the ground.

While he told the story of Liss, Sy looked across Broadway, where a Hispanic woman in red boots was leaning against a squad car talking to the cops inside. Holliwell's last view of him was walking along behind the woman in the direction of the river, hurrying until he caught up in midblock and they turned the corner together.

The hotel where Sy and Holliwell and his



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mother had lived was still standing. It was a welfare hotel now, and the junkies were lined up on a metal rail outside, resting their scarred hams on the pigeon spikes, blowing their noses into Orange Julius napkins.

This time he would refrain from sentimental journeys and gestures. Sy would be dead now, like his mother.

He took his drink to the window to look down at the patch of Central Park that was visible from his room. The lights were going on, the lawns darkening. It was remotely possible, he thought, the depression and the war years being what they were, his mother being whom she was—that Sy was his father. But it was unlikely. There had once existed, at least legally, a person called Michael J. Holliwell who was his father of record.

The thought of Sy made him feel like mourning, really like weeping. Drunk again, boozy ripe, ready to snuffle with promiscuous fervor over lost fathers and hillbilly songs. He put the glass down. The juice was turning on him altogether, softening him up; it was all catching up with him. His past was dead and his present doing poorly. In his briefcase was an unfinished address to the Autonomous University of Compostela, but he was too far gone, he decided, to even look at it.

Hunger made him feel ashamed; he experienced it as further evidence of his frail sensuality. He ate from room service and nearly finished the bottle.

When he had put the empty tray outside his door, he dutifully took up the briefcase and opened it on his night table. After a moment, he took out the address and set it aside facedown. Beneath it in the case were his air tickets and a yellow file folder in which he kept a changing collection of notes and clippings, drawn from the long hours he spent in idle reading. At any one time, Holliwell's file might contain bits from the *Times* and the newsmagazines, religious pamphlets, anything which seemed to him when he read it to have some relevance to the proper study of mankind. Often, when he reread the pieces in his file, he experienced difficulty in recalling why he had clipped them in the first place. If, after a while, he could not use the pieces in an article or introduce them in one of his classes, he would throw the entire stack away.

The file which Holliwell was bringing with him to Compostela contained only two items—a National Geographic article on Port Moresby and a letter that had appeared in his local alternative newspaper.

Holliwell took the printed letter from the file and set it before him.

"Dear Editor," it began,

*now it is evening again, and the metal bars that separate we poor shadows from the outside world have slammed shut with a soul-chilling echo. Before me lies another night in which moon and stars are only a phantom memory on the ceiling of my cell. During the night I shall experience many things. Some will be the faces of those I have loved and lost, others will be the memories of hatred and violence. And during the long night ahead I will cling to my dreams, hoping to find in the peace of slumber a surcease from the rage that gnaws inwardly at my heart.*

*My convict's world is a lonely one, and I would be bold enough to ask if there is a reader (woman, race not important) who would share my lonely hours with me by writing and speaking to me of the outside world from which the so-called justice of our society has banished me.*

*Yours truly,  
Arch Rudiger  
#197-46  
Box 56 C.F.  
Farmingdale, Wash.*

Holliwell had found the clipping in his daughter's room. It had lain for something like a year between her book of the films of Rita Hayworth and her copy of *The Last Unicorn* until he had finally snatched it up and incorporated it into his collage.

Once he had read the letter aloud to his wife; she had looked at him closely, suspecting mockery.

"I hope she answered it," his wife had said. She had helped to fashion Margaret's sense of social and moral responsibility.

Holliwell was quite certain that she had not.

He lay back on the bed, holding the clipping between his fingers, indulging Arch Rudiger with the pity he felt for himself. It reminded him of a few nights of his own.

Holliwell had ended by feeling guilty about Arch and he had assuaged his guilt by fantasizing the ideal response.

*Dear Arch #197-46:*

*I know that you are a young community male while I am a student at a privileged and elitist women's college in the East. My family's immense wealth and status fill me with shame when I consider the cruel injustice which you have suffered....*

Holliwell threw the clipping into the waste paper basket and then tossed the Port Moresby article in after it. He turned on the television set to watch the first part of a World War II movie and fell asleep in the flickering light of burning Germans.



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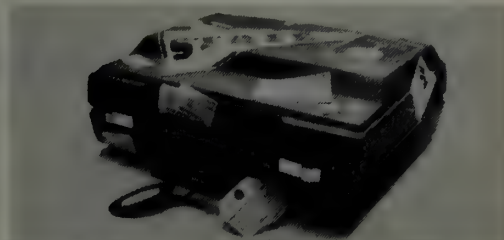
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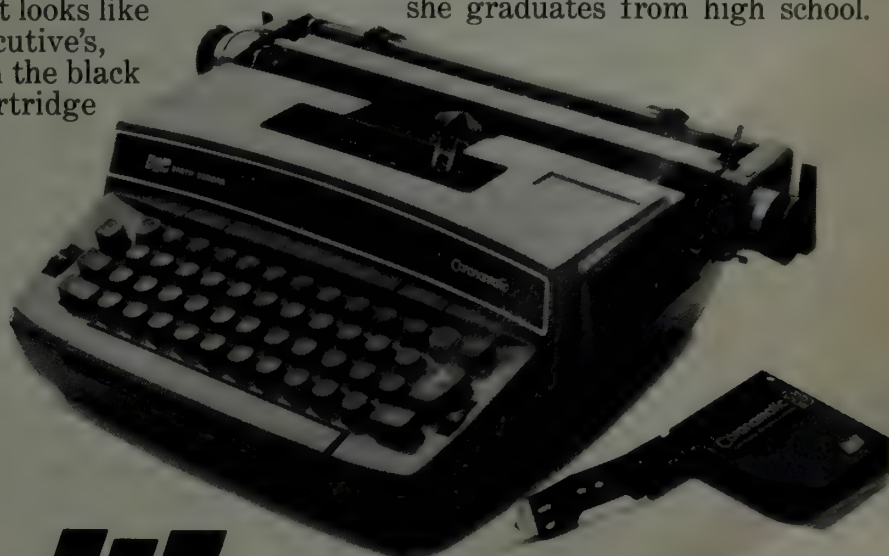
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# These SPORTING Poets

Marianne Moore  
meets the  
heavyweight  
champion  
of the world



by  
George Plimpton

*George Plimpton is a contributing editor of Harper's and author of the forthcoming One More July.*

I HAD VERY LITTLE idea what was going to come of it—the meeting arranged between Marianne Moore, the poet, and Muhammad Ali, who was the new champion then, just about to defend his crown against Ernie Terrell in Houston. It seemed quite an odd combination. She had expressed her hope of meeting him, as she and I were working on a project together—going to various events, mostly sports contests, and seeing how our artistic views of each compared—mine predictable and pedestrian, hers quirky and unexpected and illuminating: one saw something of the poetic process while sitting with her. We had been to a World Series game together, a football game, a zoo (“I am foolish about gorillas”), and a prizefight—the Floyd Patterson-George Chuvalo fight at Madison Square Garden. It was

after that fight that Miss Moore asked to meet Ali.

She loved athletes; she did not know how to account for people who could be indifferent to miracles of dexterity, though I often wondered how much she actually *knew* about sports—I mean, in the sense of the experts in the Third Avenue saloons who sounded like assistant coaches if you eavesdropped on them: they all seemed to know Tucker Frederickson, the ex-Giant; they could belabor a whole afternoon away with trivia contests, such as what major-league ballplayer had been an active player through *three* decades of baseball. Marianne Moore did not care about this sort of thing. I am not even sure that at the end of the games we attended she knew who had won. She was interested in the way pigeons dropped



wn out of the rafters, how a player wore his  
ks. She would have been entranced not by  
nnie Minoso's longevity record (he was the  
e who played in three different decades) but  
his first name, and she would have written it  
wn in a tiny notebook she carried, just the  
me "Minnie" in a delicate spidery scrawl so  
it she could ponder it later. She loved ball-  
ayers' names, and they would suddenly ar-  
e in her conversation, quite unexpectedly,  
e a sneeze: Vinegar Bend Mizell was a par-  
ticular favorite, the old Met pitcher, and she  
ld say his name when she had a fancy to.  
Another was Bill Monbouquette, the Yankee  
cher. One fine summer afternoon, when a  
all group of us were up at the stadium as  
ests of Mike Burke and the Yankee man-  
ement, she peered out over the railing of  
e second-tier box and noticed that Monbou-  
ette had a most disturbing habit at the end  
his delivery, which was to cup his groin at  
jockstrap and give it a little heft, as if to  
rrange what was within. "That is interest-  
g, what he does at the completion of his  
s," she said, and our little group stared  
nsfixed as, sure enough, he did it every time.  
was an integral part of his pitching motion,  
ely quite unconscious since it was hardly a  
sture one would think of oneself doing in  
nt of 20,000 or so people, time after time.  
e discussed whether he should be told, wheth-  
n umpire should come out and say, "Hey,  
n't do that, please—our sensibilities!" or  
ether the television cameras ever lingered  
ow his waist when he was pitching, and if  
were told, what it would do to his pitching  
ilities—to realize suddenly that for the fif-  
n years or so of his career, he had been dis-  
ying across the country this faintly obscene  
culiarity of his; it might just have kept Mon-  
quette from ever picking up a baseball  
ain without blushing and having to drop it.  
ss Moore was quite serene about what she  
d discovered. "There is an insouciance in  
t gesture which is appealing," she said.  
e should not be told. We should keep mum."  
e wrote his name down in her little book.  
onbouquette," she said, just barely audible.  
My little bouquet.' Absolutely correct."  
The rules, statistics, tactics, and the struc-  
e of the games we watched were of little in-  
est. Indeed, she seemed lost in those vast  
orts arenas; people rushed to help her, the  
icate tiny lady under one of the great hats  
e was famous for. I remember she caused a  
nsiderable flurry at Belmont Race Track by  
ing to bet 50 cents at the \$10 window, a  
g line behind her, the great hat, and those  
mediately aft of it trying to get around to  
her she couldn't do such a thing.

## Scars of battle

UNTIL SHE MET ALI, Marianne Moore's  
favorite boxer was Floyd Patterson.  
She had met him at an autographing  
party to which she had been taken  
by a neighbor. The hostess was "Miss Negro  
Bookclub," a titular choice Miss Moore found  
arresting; Sugar Ray Robinson was the chair-  
man of the event. "His competence and un-  
sensational modesty were very pleasing," she  
wrote me about the occasion. "I met Floyd  
Patterson and Buster Watson also, his assis-  
tant trainer. Floyd was very courteous, and I  
was very rude, interrupting Buster when he  
was talking to two other men. I resolved never  
to be so rude again. I bought books for some  
boys... and another for myself in which Floyd  
wrote my name and 'all the best.'"

She read the book with care—*Victory Over  
Myself*. She remembered phrases from it: "I  
never thought of boxing as a profession; it  
was a grind... but a way out for me and my  
family." Another was "Boxing is supposed to  
be a dirty business but it has made me clean  
and enabled me to do some good for others."  
I think that she was also moved by the descrip-  
tion of Patterson's childhood: he was so intim-  
idated and shy that he used to hide from the  
outside world in a cubbyhole he had discovered  
in the foundations of the New York Central  
tracks.

I arranged for a row of seats for his fight  
against Chuvalo. It was not at all clear that  
Marianne Moore was going to enjoy the eve-  
ning. She had not been to a prizefight before,  
and people hitting each other was an activity  
she could not condone. A few days before the  
fight she wrote me: "Marred physiognomy  
and an occasional death don't seem an ideal  
life objective. I do not like demolishing any-  
thing—even a paper bag. Salvaging and sav-  
ing all but dominate my life."

I asked her in the cab on the way to the  
fight if violence had ever intruded. It seemed  
an odd question to ask such a fragile per-  
son. "In Brooklyn I intercepted a small boy  
who laid down his schoolbooks to slug a class-  
mate," she replied. "When I said, 'If you don't  
stop, I'll beat you up,' he said, 'He cursed my  
mother.' I said, 'Then it's justified, but lay  
off him.'" She closed her eyes, as if in thought,  
and then she said, "One time I was driving in  
a taxi going through the Bowery; I looked out  
and saw a man with a knife creeping up on  
another. The car was going quite fast, about  
as fast as we're going now, and I can't tell you  
what the end was." She made a small snorting  
sound. "Violence! I didn't know what it meant."

**"Marred  
physiognomy  
and an occa-  
sional death  
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wrote Marianne  
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George Plimpton  
THESE  
SPORTING  
POETS

If I was wild enough to come home late at night, I didn't know enough to be timid. Once I was amazed when my friend asked, 'Do you want me to go in with you to see if anyone's in the house?' I was astonished. Someone in the house? But now I have been trained to call out, 'Who is it?' and when I look out the little peephole I see my good friend, or a neighbor, and I feel craven."

Miss Moore was wearing her famous tricorne hat with its ship's prow effect; when she turned to speak it gave a sort of thrust to what she was saying, much like talking to a miner in the beam of the light from his helmet. Her tricorne fit nicely in the cab. She had others which would have required some jimmying around to fit—a great cartwheel of a stiffened felt hat that one had to get under if walking along beside her, skulking along Groucho Marx-like to hear what she was saying in her soft, erratic voice. She told me that she had picked the tricorne for the fight "because my other hats keep anyone behind me from seeing."

We picked up some friends to join us at the fight. Just as we were nearing the Garden, Miss Moore heard something from one of them about Chuvalo that shook her support of Patterson, namely, that Chuvalo was so incredibly poor at the start of his ring career that on one occasion he and his wife drove across Canada in a car so decrepit that the accelerator pedal had come off, and a part of the accelerator arm; Mrs. Chuvalo had to crouch under the dashboard and at a signal from her husband depress or raise what was left of the accelerator: "Bring her up a touch; we're coming into a town." Miss Moore was moved by this nearly to the point of shifting her allegiance. She asked to be told the story again.

It was obviously on her mind during the fight. We had good seats in the mezzanine, far enough away so that the physical side of the fight was not too pronounced. Still, at a solid blow, small gasps erupted from her. Once I heard her call out, "George!" Another time, "Floyd!" She had a small pad and pencil with her, though I never saw her write anything down. She seemed relieved when the fight was over. "Well, that's that," she said brightly, as if something especially wrenching had been completed, like a frightening circus act.

She wrote me subsequently when she had had time to consider things: "I did not enjoy the Patterson-Chuvalo fight at all until Floyd began to win and in the end suffered no major damage." But she could not rid herself of the Chuvalo accelerator story. "A moralist at heart, my notions of psychic adaptiveness and creativeness of muscular as well as mental endurance were enlarged by Mrs. Chuvalo's scars

of battle with life when she held a finger in fixed position to replace what should have been an automatic device in the car." She wrote that she had also been taken by the referee's performance: "The assiduous preciseness of the referee in seizing the angle most advantageous from which to see every trifle impressed me most—and his impeccable appearance—nothing sticking out or dangling. Swart and compact, the embodiment of vigilance."

She had also noticed Muhammad Ali at the fight—he had been sitting on the far side of the ring and had jumped up into it to talk with Patterson at the conclusion. When I next saw her, I asked if she would like to meet him. She nodded: "I do not see any reason why I should not meet someone who assures everyone 'I am the greatest' and who is a poet nonetheless."

SOME WEEKS LATER I was able to arrange our tea through Hal Conrad, the fight publicist. For a reason that I have forgotten, we had it at Toots Shor's establishment in mid-Manhattan. The place was almost empty when Miss Moore and I arrived, about four in the afternoon. The late Toots Shor himself was there, but knowing that Ali was expected, he did not sit with us. He did not approve of Ali then, or perhaps ever, and he sat at the opposite end of the room studiously ignoring us. From our barquette, Miss Moore looked over and was impressed by him. She had heard that he had started in the restaurant business as a bouncer. I think she expected, or perhaps hoped, that he would "bounce" someone. "His haunt is quite peaceful," she said to me. "It makes the offices of bouncer seem hearsay; no killer instinct has made itself evident."

"No, no," I said. "I think he has other people to do that for him these days. Besides, there's no one in here for him to bounce except the waiters and you and me."

"Fancy," she said.

Presently Muhammad Ali arrived with Hal Conrad. He slid in behind the table and arranged himself next to Miss Moore. He gazed at her hat, which was the same tricorne she had worn to the fight. Almost immediately, as if she had yet to arrive, he turned to Hal and me and asked who she was and what he was expected to do. Had a photographer arrived?

Miss Moore listened attentively to what Conrad and I had to say about her—a great sports fan, one of the most distinguished poets in the country . . .

"Mrs. Moore," said Ali, turning and looking at her, "a grandmother going to the fights?"



he made a confused gesture and then had a cup of her tea.

He ordered a bowl of beef soup and a phone. He announced that if she were the greatest poetess in the country then the two of them could produce something together—"I am a poet, too," he said—a joint-effort sonnet, with each of them doing alternate lines. Miss Moore nodded vaguely. Ali was very much the more decisive of the pair, picking not only the form but also the topic: "Mrs. Moore and I are going to write a sonnet about my upcoming fight in Houston with Ernie Terrell. Mrs. Moore said I will show the world with this great poem who is who and what is what and who is going to win." A pen was produced. Ali was given a menu on which to write. He started off with half the first line—"After we defeat..." and left Miss Moore to write in "Ernie Terrell" in her spidery script—just to get her "warmed up." He wrote most of the second line "He will catch nothing..." expecting Miss Moore to fill in the obvious rhyme, and he was quite surprised when she did not. I could see her lips move as she fussed with possibilities. Finally, he leaned over and whispered to her, "But hell, Mrs. Moore."

"Oh, yes," she said. She wrote down "but hell." Then she wrestled with it some more, tucking gently, murmuring about the rhythm

of the line, and then she crossed it out and substituted, "He will get nothing, nothing but hell."

Ali took over and produced his next line in jig time: "Terrell was big and ugly and tall." He pushed the menu over to her. His soup arrived. He leaned low over it, spooning it in, glancing over to see how she was coming along. While we waited, he told Conrad and me that he was going to try to get the poem out over the Associated Press wire that afternoon. Miss Moore's eyes widened—the irony of all those years struggling with *Broom* and the other literary magazines, and now to be with a fighter who promised instant publication over a ticker. It did not help the flow of inspiration. She was doubtless intimidated by Ali's presence, especially at his obvious concern that she—a distinguished poet—was having such a hard time holding up her side: in his mind speed of delivery was very much a qualification of a professional poet. He finished his soup and ordered another. The phone arrived and was plugged in behind the banquette. He began dialing a series of numbers, hotels most of them, but the people he requested never seemed to respond.

Finally, seeing that she had not got anywhere at all, he took the poem from her and completed it. It was not done in a patroniz-

**"We've got to show you thinking, Mrs. Moore," Ali said. "How you show you're thinking hard is to point your finger into the middle of your head."**



Wide World



## THE TREASURES OF TUTANKHAMUN

In 1922 a British archaeologist named Howard Carter and his sponsor, the fifth Earl of Carnarvon, discovered the tomb of King Tutankhamun and at once made headlines around the world. Dignitaries, scholars, tourists, and occultists flocked to the site of the most spectacular archaeological discovery of the twentieth century. It had taken Carter six years to find the burial site (he was on the verge of giving up), and six more would be consumed in the excavation and clearing. The four small rooms that comprised the tomb held an abundance of treasure in the form of jewelry, massive objects of solid gold, sculpture, wall carvings, and furniture that would later influence modern design. The mummy had survived for 3,000 years, spared the depredations of tomb robbers scouring the Egyptian burial grounds, only because the location of its tomb had remained such a mystery. Evidence also suggested that early plunderers had gained entry to the first antechamber and fled, having been frightened off before they could complete their depredations. As objects were removed from the tomb, scholars began to piece together the brief reign of the king who ascended the throne in 1346 B.C. at age of twelve and died in 1338 B.C. of an unknown cause.

Recently, *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, the most important and beautiful exhibition of ancient Egyptian art ever mounted in the United States, opened a two-and-a-half-year, six-city tour at the National Gallery of Art in Washington. The exhibition was organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where it will be shown in December 1978. The exhibition features fifty-five art objects from Tutankhamun's tomb, rare photographs of the excavation site taken between 1922 and 1928, and extracts from Howard Carter's own journal, all assembled to recreate the excitement of the original discovery.

Now, as a result of a great cooperative effort between the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, a splendid collection of reproductions has been developed from these ancient works of art. For the first time ever, craftsmen were permitted to make molds directly from the fragile, priceless originals. In some cases, when the original object was too fragile to be handled, accurate molds were created from the actual objects. The result of these efforts is a collection of strikingly beautiful objects from which the selections on these pages were taken.



### DJED PILLAR PENDANT

When an Egyptian king began his reign, a huge "djed pillar," weighing many tons, was raised by means of ropes and pulleys as part of his ceremonial initiation. The pillar signified endurance and stability. This pendant, made from a mold of the original found in Tut's tomb, is a djed pillar in miniature. Large Djed. 24-kt. gold electroplate. Approx. 3" (G2040) \$15  
Medium Djed. 24-kt. gold electroplate. Approx. 2" (G2041) \$6  
Chain. 12-kt. gold-filled. 24" (G2868) \$12.50

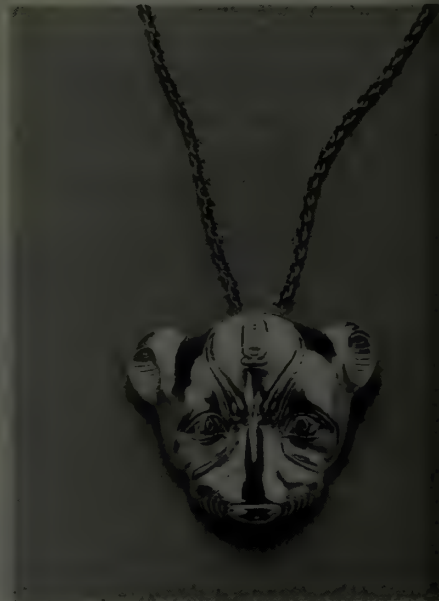
### LEOPARD HEAD PENDANT AND BUCKLE

This is an adaptation of a large wooden sculpture found in Tut's tomb. His throne name, Nebkheperura, is on the leopard's forehead. Egyptian kings were given as many as five names, but only his personal name (Tutankhamun) and throne name were used regularly by him.

Pendant. 24-kt. gold electroplate. 2" (G3362) \$20

Chain. 12-kt. gold-filled. 24" (G2878) \$15

Buckle. 2" buckle in 24-kt. gold electroplate mounted on 1-5/8" belt. Women's sizes only. Small (IO775), medium (IO776), large (IO777) \$55



### COBRA IN REPOSE

A strikingly beautiful pin, made from a mold of the original amulet found on the mummy of King Tutankhamun. The S shape has a special significance

in Egyptian hieroglyphics, where it stood for the sound "dj." Pin. 24-kt. gold electroplate (G2640) \$17.50



## ARTOUCHE RING

Artouche is an encircling of the name or portrait of a king to imply the world belonged to him. These amulet-looking rings are made from molds of the originals found on Tut's mummy. One is of Tut himself, the other of the god Amun. The seated figure is the god Amun, who bears in his right hand the ankh, or symbol of life. 24-kt. gold electroplate. Ring size 5 (G2030), size 6 (G2032), size 7 (G2034), size 9 (G2036), size 10 (G2038) \$16.50. Tutankhamun is shown kneeling before the image of goddess Maat. 24-kt. gold electroplate. Ring size 5 (G3801), size 6 (G3803), size 7 (G3805), size 9 (G3807), size 10 (G3809) \$12.50



## DECORATED SCARAB

A scarab is a representation of a dung beetle, the symbol of resurrection and immortality. This pendant is the front or underside of the beetle decorated with three figures, Tut, Atum, and the falcon god, Ra-Harakhty, who holds an ankh to give Tut eternal life.

Pendant. 24-kt. gold electroplate (G3352) \$18.50. Chain. 12-kt. gold-filled. 24" (G3362) \$18.75



## UDJAT EYE PENDANT

Legend has it that Horus, a sun god, son of Isis and Osiris, fought with Seth, god of vengeance, who pulled his eyeball apart and threw it away. When another god, Thoth, found it, he put it back together, and returned it to Horus. This amulet of the eye of Horus therefore came to signify soundness and health. It is a human eye and eyebrow with falcon markings underneath. On the left is a uraeus, a rearing cobra, commonly seen on kings' helmets as a symbol of royalty; it wears the crown of Lower Egypt. On the right the god Nekhbet wears the crown of Upper Egypt.

Pendant. 24-kt. gold electroplate (G3866) \$24.50. Chain. 12-kt. gold-filled. 18" (G2864) \$11.00

## MENET BIRD PENDANT

In the Nile Valley the menet birds came out at dawn, shrilly crying all day, before retiring at dusk. They therefore became associated with the rising and setting of the sun. Known also as Egyptian swallows, the menet birds inhabit the Nile Valley to this day. This amulet, made from a mold of the original found in Tut's tomb, shows a menet bird with the solar orb resting on its tail.

Pin. 24-kt. gold electroplate (G2005) \$7.50. 18-kt. gold (G4001) \$120. Pendant. 24-kt. gold electroplate (G2010) \$6.75. 18-kt. gold (G4005) \$120. Chains (not shown). 12-kt. gold-filled (G2853) \$3. 18-kt. gold (G4810) \$32.50



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George Plimpton  
THESE  
SPORTING  
POETS

ing way at all, but more out of consideration, presumably that every poet, however distinguished, is bound to have a bad day and should be helped through it. "Now let's see," he said as he began to write. He had moved close to her, so that she appeared to be looking down the long length of his arm to watch the poem emerge. "Yes," she said, "why not?" as he produced a last couplet. The whole composition, once he had taken over, took about a minute. With the spelling corrected, it read as follows:

*After we defeat Ernie Terrell,  
He will get nothing, nothing but hell.  
Terrell was big and ugly and tall,  
But when he fights me he is sure to fall.  
If he criticize this poem by me and  
Miss Moore,  
To prove he is not the champ she will stop  
him in four.  
He is claiming to be the real heavyweight  
champ,  
But when the fight starts he will look like  
a tramp.  
He has been talking too much about me  
and making me sore.  
After I am through with him he will not be  
able to challenge Mrs. Moore.*

The stratagem of involving her in the poem, particularly as a pugilist herself, was clever: Miss Moore nodded in delight. She made a tiny fist. "Yes, he has been making me sore," she said.

A photographer arrived at the table—something of a surprise. He was from one of the wire services. I suspect that Muhammad Ali, knowing that he was meeting someone of distinction, if not quite sure *whom*, had arranged for the event to be recorded. Miss Moore did not seem to mind. She allowed Ali—who continued to dominate the afternoon—to dictate the poses. His idea was to have the photograph show the two of them at work on the poem. "We've got to show you *thinking*, Mrs. Moore," he said. "How you show you're thinking hard is to point your finger into the middle of your head." He illustrated, jabbing his forefinger at his forehead, closing his eyes to indicate concentration. She complied, pursing her lips in feigned concern as she pondered the menu poem. The photographer clicked away.

Miss Moore then expressed a wish to see the Ali shuffle—a foot maneuver which Ali occasionally did in mid-fight that made him look like a man trying to stay upright on a carpet being pulled out from under him. Ali said he would be delighted to show her the shuffle. He thought it would be best to do it out in the street, where he had room to do her a really good shuffle. When we walked out-

doors, a crowd immediately formed—I think word had gone around the neighborhood that the fighter was in Toots Shor's place—so we went back through the revolving door, and he did the shuffle right there in the foyer. Miss Moore was delighted. She asked him to do it again, and when he went out and did the shuffle for the people in the street, she watched him through the revolving door.

"Well," she said when he had left. "He has every excuse for avoiding a performance. But he festooned out in as enticing a bit of shuffling as you would ever wish to see."

"He 'festooned'?" I asked.

"He certainly did. He was exactly what I had hoped to meet."

## A whiz-bang of words

SUBSEQUENTLY, I WROTE Miss Moore and asked her what she had thought of her afternoon at Toots Shor's. What was her opinion of Ali as a poet?

She wrote: "Well, we were slightly under constraint. And the rhyme for Terrell (*hell*) being of one syllable is hardly novel. . . . Cassius has an ear, and a liking for balance. . . . comic, poetic drama, it is poetry . . . saved him a hair from being the flattest, peanuttiest, unwariest of boastings."

She was especially pleased that the poem (which she thought might be titled "Muhammad Ado About Cassius") showed a strong sense of structure, which indeed involved herself. "He begins by mentioning a special guest and concludes with mention of the same." She then went on to produce a whiz-bang of words about Ali.

*The Greatest, though a mere youth, has  
snuffed out more dragons than Smokey the  
Bear hath. Mighty-muscled and fit, he is  
confident; he is sagacious, ever so, he trains.  
A king's daughter is bestowed on him as a  
fiancée. He is literary, in the tradition of  
Sir Philip Sidney, defensor of poesie. His  
verse is enhanced by alliteration. He is sum-  
moned by an official: "Come forth, Cas-  
sius." He is not even deterred by the small  
folks' dragons. He has a fondness for an-  
tithesis; he will not only give fighting les-  
sons, but falling lessons. Admittedly the  
classiest and the brassiest. When asked,  
"How do you feel about being called by the  
British 'Gaseous Clay'?" his reply is one  
of the prettiest in literature. "I do not re-  
sent it." Note this: beat grime revolts him.  
He is neat. His brow is high. If beaten, he  
is still not "beat." He fights and he writes.  
Is there something I have missed?  
He is a smiling pugilist.*



# THE MASTER OF GANESHPURI



**A**BOUT FORTY MILES north of Bombay, a small road branches from the highway into a parched valley. The road has been washed away so often by monsoon that it is all patches and potholes. Barely wide enough for one car, it winds past huts made of straw and bamboo, kilns of reddish clay smoking in the fields, dried rice seedlings. The land sprawls in the dry heat as if it had been punched by a fist. Ten miles down this road is the ashram of Swami Muktananda. Although I don't like to think of myself as a spiritual tourist, I suppose that's what I am. Yet even these few minutes driving from the airport have served to complicate my scenario.

For miles after leaving Bombay, it seemed that all the debris in creation had been clapped into a vast shantytown disappearing into haze. Wherever I looked, small coppery people matted around breakfast fires, or scrubbed themselves in bamboo enclosures, or swarmed over the road. Smoke from hundreds of small fires mingled with truck exhaust and burnt buffalo dung. The impression was not so much one of misery, as of a life matter so condensed it might have come from a collapsed star.

All of India seemed to pass by me on that road that morning: an elephant ambling through the crowd with an itinerant monk on its back; hundreds of barefoot pilgrims on their way to a shrine somewhere in the north; a gas station called the Shree Sadguru (roughly, "true guru") Garage.

When I first met Swami Muktananda in

New York, two-and-a-half years before, I wasn't exactly looking for a guru, nor had I much interest in Eastern philosophy. Indeed, I don't think I will ever understand why, after sitting with him for a few minutes, I experienced a surge of emotions so powerful and so profound that it left me exhausted. I wept uncontrollably, although, at the same time, I found that I was unaccountably happy, for I had a sense of having seen myself for the first time. A guru, I learned, wasn't someone you went to for advice about how to live. He didn't whisper in your ear the secret that life is a bowl of cherries, or any other secret, for that matter. A guru, in the truest meaning of the word, was someone who could "infect" you with the experience of ecstasy, and who could then help you to control it, and to integrate it into your life.

I had come to India to get "reinfected" at the source, so to speak. I wasn't expecting to be initiated into a mysterious Eastern cult. Nor was I looking forward to a retreat—some holy peace and quiet—as one might find in a monastery. Because the "source" was not really India, nor even Muktananda, but myself, one could say that this was no journey at all, and that I had come halfway round the world to discover what had been closest to me all along. I was aware of this paradox during my entire stay. Superimposed on the shock of a strange culture, and the special intensity of discipleship, was a sense of having gone nowhere, of being home in the ordinary, which, in this case, happened to be an ashram in western India.

On the ashram  
of Swami  
Muktananda

by Paul Zweig

*Paul Zweig is the author of The Adventurer and several books of poetry. His most recent book, published in 1976, is Three Journeys.*



Paul Zweig  
THE MASTER  
OF  
GANESHPURI

Two saints

THE SANSKRIT WORD *ashram* means literally a place of refuge. It is invariably used in a spiritual connection, and can apply, for example, to a retreat for widows, or even, I was told, for "sacred" cows.

India is, of course, famous for a kind of religious anarchy. All degrees of superstition, idol worship, and high mystical aim co-exist in a relatively happy chaos. To the streamlined Western mind, it is a religion of too much: too many gods, too many arms and legs, too many doctrines, and, disconcertingly, little discomfort at any contradictions whatever. At a second glance, however, the anarchy seems more one of method, for there is a remarkable agreement among virtually all sects and cults as to the highest aim of spiritual work: it is to obtain a direct experience of that inner plenitude which the Hindus call God, or the soul, or the Self, and finally, if one is stubborn or lucky enough, to become one with it. Someone who has succeeded in this endeavor is said to be a saint, according to the Hindu opinion that one who loves God is God. Among saints, one who has permanently wedded his psychological to his spiritual being, and therefore lives without lapse in the ecstasy of the Self, is a rare and very great saint, a *paramahansa*. Wherever a saint lives and meets disciples is called an ashram, whether it be in a cave, under a tree, or in a palace.

When Muktananda founded his ashram in 1962, it consisted of three primitive rooms beside a dirt road that became a stream of mud during the monsoon. Across the road was a huddle of straw-and-bamboo huts, the village of Gavdevi. Muktananda was living more or less on Gavdevi's cremation grounds. Now the ashram spreads over fifty acres and houses almost 600 disciples, more than half of them Westerners. Each day people come from all over western India—in fact, from all over the world—to spend a few minutes or hours there. On festival days the visitors number in the thousands, and are housed in gaily colored tents. Gavdevi is still there, swimming in dust or mud depending on the season. But a few hundred yards away stands a double row of small brick houses which Muktananda has built for the villagers. Indeed, long before reaching the ashram I saw clusters of brick houses on the outskirts of almost every hamlet, and a sign: "Muktanand Swami: Avinasi Colony." *Avinasi* is the Hindi word for aborigine. It means that the population of this

valley—small, incredibly thin people with black skins—belongs to one of the ancient pre-Hindu tribes left more or less unmolested for thousands of years to inhabit the worst jungle and poorest lands of India.

Muktananda's valley is really a sort of frontier. Its modern history is the history of two saints, Muktananda and his guru before him, Nityananda, who came here on foot around 1930, and started living far from any road in a patch of snake-infested jungle near a hot sulfur spring. By the time Muktananda came to meet him, almost twenty years later, the jungle had been cleared by followers, and a town named Ganeshpuri had sprung up around the open-air shelter where Nityananda lived, almost naked. During the last years of his life, crippled by arthritis, he agreed to move into a large building which his followers had erected for him, and the building became a kind of ashram. By then, Nityananda had caused roads, schools, and dispensaries to be built with the large sums of money disciples insisted on laying at his feet.

By all accounts, Nityananda was an enigmatic and powerful individual. He rarely spoke more than a few words at a time, flew into terrifying rages, and sometimes refused to see anyone for days, though crowds gathered in the hope merely of glimpsing him, for it is considered lucky in India to see—better yet, touch—a saint. Nityananda wasn't, strictly speaking, a teacher, at least not explicitly, yet among the thousands who came to see him out of reverence or superstition a few gained formal initiation, and Nityananda became the guru. Muktananda was one of them.

By the mid 1950s, he too had achieved "liberation," after a series of hallucinatory experiences which he describes as a sort of death in life. Following Nityananda's instructions, Muktananda settled in the three-room compound, living mostly on bread and Nityananda's café. During those years, Muktananda spent his time gardening and welcoming anyone the guru sent to see him. On weekends when visitors multiplied and brought food, he indulged in his passion—his last "addiction," he called it—for cooking. The people Nityananda sent him tended to be intellectuals and better-educated followers who couldn't deal with Nityananda's silences and his sometimes eccentric behavior.

After Nityananda died, in 1961, Muktananda began to let a few disciples live with him. "There were no special activities in the days," one of them told me. "We spent hours sitting with Baba, or helping him in the garden. In the afternoons he let us chant a little and we meditated on a porch outside his room."



seemed to be in an ecstatic state all the time, even when he was cooking or reading the newspaper."

Within a year there were so many followers, that Muktananda was obliged to create a legal trust, and Shree Gurudev Ashram was formally established.

**A**FTER THE SPINDLY villages and the tattered landscape of the valley, the ashram buildings seemed alive with color. I thought of a medieval monastery in the midst of the wilderness. A jumble of unfinished construction spilled into the valley across the road from the main gate. The ashram was expanding, as it had virtually without stop, I was told, for fifteen years. Already there were stores, a post office, and a bank; soon a hospital. *Avinasi* workers hurried over several unfinished structures, painting and shouting as they passed basins of cement from hand to hand.

Muktananda was just starting out on his morning walk when I came into the courtyard. He chuckled when he saw me, and took my hand. The courtyard felt like an aquarium, with flecks of sunlight cascading between the trees. It was so intensely quiet that for a moment I felt a pressure at my ears, as if I

were indeed underwater. The casualness of our meeting was like a meeting between old friends. Yet I couldn't help remembering that first time, two-and-a-half years before, when my mind had opened into a shower of warm fiery pieces. That feeling of inner spaciousness had never entirely left me. It became palpable now in the brightness and calm of the courtyard.

At first there was no one to translate, so I couldn't understand what Muktananda was saying. But his whimsical, throaty voice seemed full of communication, and I was reminded how little of what passed between us was conveyed by words. It turned out that he was inviting me to walk with him, and we started off.

Muktananda moved briskly through the ashram garden, striking off sparks of instruction to the manager, seemingly at every step, about irrigation channels, new tree plantings, what to feed the peacocks and deer he kept as reminders of the story of Krishna. We stopped under a sprawling banyan tree. "The villagers used to execute criminals under this tree. Now an old cobra lives inside there," he said, pointing to the partly rotted trunk. We lingered in one of the barns where his favorite cow, gleaming and black, had just calved. He rubbed the side of her head for a while, and then bent

**"I never saw Muktananda argue with anyone. He seemed willing to accept any form of devotion, even the most bizarre, as a perfectly good language for the love of God."**



Gauri Hubert



Paul Zweig  
THE MASTER  
OF  
GANESHPURI

over and whispered something in her ear. As we left, he instructed the cowherd to play a record of sitar music for her, and to rub her down with a bottle of heena perfume which he had brought along with him for the purpose.

Scattered among the mango, eucalyptus, and cashew trees, were a gleaming white Shiva temple, a huge open-sided hall for ceremonial occasions, a meditation building with marble floors and an altar dedicated to Nityananda. Here and there were painted statues portraying scenes from the Ramayana. The statues had the cheerful naiveté of popular art, and Muktananda chuckled proudly as he pointed them out to me.

Despite his slight build, Muktananda, like many saints, has a large stomach, called a *kumbach*, which is the result of breath retention. As he walked, his stomach preceded him, almost playfully, so that, with his short curly beard and his dark glasses, he resembled an exotic Santa Claus. Again I remembered what had especially moved me about him whenever I came to see him in the United States. He was so unlike a "holy man," so free of stylized piety and portentousness. During much of the walk, he might have been a factory owner keeping a sharp eye on the nuts and bolts of his business.

After his walk, Muktananda sat on a small carpeted porch in a corner of the courtyard, chatting with a couple of itinerant monks, or *sadhus*, who were staying at the ashram for a few days. Suddenly, the courtyard was full. Dozens of people formed into a line, or sat down cross-legged on the marble pavement around Muktananda's porch. It was time for *darshan*, a saint's audience with his followers. Three or four times each day Muktananda gave *darshan*. This was when disciples could approach him with questions, or simply sit in his presence in a sort of open-eyed meditation. It was also when visitors, who had often come hundreds of miles, could greet him and receive his touch.

As days passed, it became clear that *darshan* was the hub of ashram life. The ashram itself was a form of attenuated *darshan* which became focused and explicit during the hours of the day when Muktananda sat, kingly and remote, on his courtyard seat, his head bobbing casually as if he were sitting on water. It occurred to me that the *darshan* of a saint offered a curious relief from the fragmentation of Indian life into castes and classes. *Darshan* might, in fact, be India's most intense democracy. Silk-clad businessmen from Bombay stood deferentially in the line, along with the driver of the local bus, village women wearing heavy gold ornaments in their nos-

trils, peasants in soiled white robes who had walked for hours or days to lay some vegetables or a few rupees at Muktananda's feet. Occasionally someone fell to the ground, his arms and legs bending stiffly into ritual postures. When this happened, the line moved forward as usual, and Muktananda ignored the trancelike behavior, called a *kriya*, unless it became loud and appeared to disturb others. Then he would bark a few words in a piercing tone of voice. Almost always the trance stopped immediately, and the person, looking bewildered, stumbled to his feet and went to sit somewhere in the back of the courtyard.

One morning some wandering Jain nuns came for Muktananda's *darshan*. They wore shields over their mouths and carried small mops to sweep the ground before they walked on it. The idea was to avoid harming even the smallest creature by accidentally crushing or swallowing it. Jainism is said to be the oldest religion, and it is extremely austere. These nuns, for example, went barefoot, and slept only on the ground or on a floor. The Jains believe that, by keeping apart from the world, the soul will eventually grow lighter, more buoyant, until, after thousands of lifetimes, it will float to the top of creation like a balloon clinging to the roof of a circus tent. Muktananda talked affably with them about the need to dissolve traditional barriers of caste and religion. They nodded happily, and after a while they got up and mopped the way out of the courtyard. What could they make, I wondered, of Muktananda's sun-dappled gardens and his delicately veined marble courtyard; of his peacocks and deer, and his silk clothing? A saint didn't have to be a world-hater. Muktananda was evidence of that. He was always saying that true renunciation was more demanding, and more subtle than physical austerities. On the other hand, I never saw him argue with anyone. He seemed willing to accept any form of meditation, even the most bizarre, as a perfect good language for the love of God.

I was struck by the multiplicity of Muktananda's roles. He seemed as willing to cuss the need for a new pump to increase the local water supply, as he was to let his forehead be rubbed by a woman who wanted her first child to be a son, or to interpret a difficult aphorism in the Shiva Sutras for an inquiring scholar. In a single movement of the *darshan* line he was an imperious master, a rabbi, a foot, and the local mayor. A saint, it seemed, was a kind of public property. Everyone took away what he had come for, and Muktananda, lounging on his porch in gleam-





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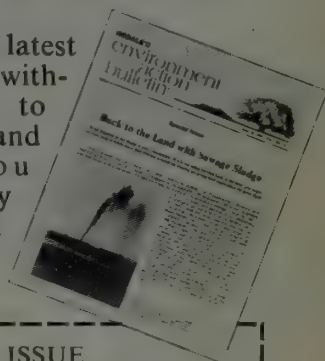
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orange silks, gave it casually without seeming to notice.

### A song to Shiva

WITHIN HOURS of my arrival the ashram routine had swallowed me, and I was navigating in a suite of days which no amount of activity seemed able to fill. There was a feeling of intense, almost transfixing, aimlessness and a sort of pleasurable boredom. Not that activities were lacking. On the contrary, between work periods, chanting, and *darshan*, most of each day was accounted for.

At home I could rarely sit still to meditate for more than forty minutes. Here, hours passed in the early morning. My head filled with milky light, and my legs fell asleep. During the day, I had only to close my eyes and a

pressure gripped my head. If I went to one of the meditation halls, especially one called the cave, in a basement room under Muktananda's apartment, my breath became faint and regular, and I felt almost paralyzed with concentration. Sometimes I thought of an embryo floating between the stars, or of a well with an image shimmering far, far down on the surface of the water.

The day began at 3:30 A.M. with gongs and conch shells announcing a period of early meditation. Shortly before five, a chant called *arati* was held in the main hall, followed by a few minutes for the disciples to have tea in the dining room or a glass of Nescafé and boiled buffalo milk just outside the gate, at a dingy tea shop which Westerners called the Sydney Greenstreet Café. From 6:00 to 7:30 the principal chant of the morning was held. This consisted of a series of prayers and rhythmic chants, accompanied by a drum, and ending with a long philosophical poem entitled the "Guru Gita." Every once in a while Muktananda would sweep into the hall during the "Guru Gita," usually to scold us for not chanting sweetly enough. His angers were electrifying, and the people seemed almost to look forward to them. When he shouted, he didn't need a translator. He would lean forward in his chair, and take his glasses off, and the room would fill with a feeling of excitement verging on panic. One had a sense that Muktananda's angers were theatrical, even when his voice became piercing and genuinely frightening, yet everyone collaborated in the play which became a sort of family drama.

The rest of the day was divided among work assignments, *darshan*, and several periods of chanting, the most beautiful of which was held in the courtyard at the end of the evening. This was a melodic love song to Shiva and lasted for an hour. All the energy and fatigue of the day resolved themselves in the chant, which was followed, a few minutes later, by lights out.

Although Muktananda insisted that the purpose of living in an ashram was to cultivate meditation, virtually no time was formally set aside for it, except during the early morning hours. Meditation rooms were open during much of the day, and disciples could use them when they wanted to. But the enforced discipline of the ashram routine made it hard to find more than a few minutes at a time. It was as if Muktananda wanted his followers to be little hungry for meditation, as if he wanted a feeling of pent-up meditation to spill over into their daily activities. It seemed that the purpose of ashram life was to break down the antagonism between activity and meditation.



Gauri Hubert



AS THE DAYS PASSED, the sleepy intensity of the ashram settled over me, and I found myself reluctant even to go for walks in the countryside, as if I might miss something in the interim, although, of course, there was nothing to miss. I strolled through the penance grove, or sat in one of the temples and read a book from the ashram library. After my arrival, Muktananda seemed to forget I was there, until one day, about a week later, he turned to me during *darshan* and asked if I wanted to visit Ganeshpuri that afternoon. There was going to be a procession honoring Nityananda, as there was every Thursday, which is Guru Day in India.

The procession began shortly before dusk at a temple on the edge of town dedicated to Nityananda. Some villagers led by a priest formed into a double line, and started chanting and dancing to the accompaniment of a mrid drum. Behind them, a silver palanquin was shouldered by four men, and a flame lighted inside it. Two beadles in rich velvet uniforms led the way holding banners, followed by a second drummer beating a completely different rhythm, and a man with a long reed playing a solo which bore an eerie resemblance to a free-jazz improvisation.

The procession emerged from the front door of the temple, and started up the only street, singing "Om Namo Gurudev Nityanandaya" over and over. Every few yards the palanquin, which was a portable altar, stopped, and people brought offerings of flowers and coconuts, and threw popped rice as at a wedding. It was very casual and carefree. Many townspeople fell in with the procession, brushing cows off the way and chanting along, wildly but happily off key. The procession ended at a small temple on the other side of town, and the din became truly amazing: the chanting of the two drummers, the jazz, and now a set of loud bells ringing the evening prayer at the temple. God couldn't help hearing.

A while later, in a shed next to Nityananda's temple, the villagers held a *supta*, or ceremony of dance and chant. The dancing was highly dignified but dignified, and the chant leader sang with wonderful fervor: "Hooray for Nityananda, we love Nityananda, Praise for the great Siddha Nityananda." It was a sort of square dance, with more and more people joining in, until a young boy raced into the room and started to beat a huge kettle drum. The sound alone was enough to drive everyone out of the shed and into the temple for a last chant, sounding more like a schoolyard rope-jumping song, was sung by a group of children with high, reedy voices.

The evening stirred me deeply. I don't think

I had ever quite grasped how much of Muktananda's personality emanated from this archaic countryside with its miseries and its drowsy instinct for survival. In America he seemed to have come from nowhere. Yet here, in Ganeshpuri, one saw his origins, so to speak: the folk piety, the good-natured spirituality, which served as a nutrient, and a background, for the great saints. At the same time, I found the evening puzzlingly familiar, for I had seen it before in small French or Italian towns on days of religious festival: a little more starched, a little more solemn, but ragged and good-natured and communal nonetheless, bridging all the differences of doctrine between continents and religions. Here, on a level of popular celebration, was the same universality which moved me in Muktananda's teaching. "Religion is like a car," I remember him saying once. "It will take you some distance, but in order to actually arrive you have to get out and go the rest of the way on foot. In an ashram, you don't learn about religion, you learn how to walk."

It occurred to me that I had never been in a less mysterious place, and that my journey had come full circle. The hot bright days, the simple, almost stodgy, decor of the meditation halls, the immaculate gardens with their temples and statues and their groves of fruit trees, were the setting for an exercise in self-knowledge which was not alien or occult, but simply human. If there was a mystery here, it was in myself; if there was a "secret," I was it. As for Muktananda, his power lay precisely in his lack of mystery. If he was a wizard, he was a wizard of the ordinary, and that was the mystery.

The feeling of inner spaciousness which settled over me when I sat to meditate; the moments of absorption when the inner and outer spaces no longer seemed quite so separate, as if a membrane of self-definition had suddenly become porous, and the currents of life were mingling freely through it: these were not Indian or Eastern experiences; they were simply ways of being human. In a certain sense I was not in India at all, certainly not in some exotic ritual setting. I was in myself, or, alternatively, I was in the world.

"What I like about Baba," an Indian disciple told me one day, "is that he's such a rationalist."

I found this to be true. Everything about him seemed to insist that there was no spiritual life separate from a worldly life, no "supernatural" dispensation to relieve one from the need to be oneself: there was only life, and the question was whether to have less of it, or more of it, or even all of it.

**"In a certain sense I was not in India at all, certainly not in some exotic ritual setting. I was in myself, or, alternatively, I was in the world."**



# THE NEW POETRY

The forms are very strict

by E. L. Doctorow

*Whatever [the writer] beholds or experiences comes to him as a model and sits for its picture. . . . He believes that all that can be thought can be written. . . . In his eyes a man is the faculty of reporting and the universe is the possibility of being reported.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson  
“Goethe; or the Writer”

SOME OF US who are writers find the universe in our marriages and affairs, in the inadequacies of our parents, and in the antagonism of our peers. We produce heroes and heroines of private life. What is possible to report is the exquisite sensibility we have for the moral failings of those around us. This is not necessarily a misuse of the faculty, but neither is it the only use. There is a kind of writer appearing with greater and greater frequency among us who witnesses the crimes of his own government against himself and his countrymen. He chooses to explore the intimate subject of a human being's relationship to the state. His is the universe of the imprisoned, the tortured, the disfigured; and the doleful authority for the truth of his work is usually his own body. Thus we have Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, an account of the vast Soviet system of secret police and labor camps. Because it is set in a part of the world to which we have tenuous connection, we can be safely righteous about the prisoners freezing and dying there. What can we do for them short of beginning World War III on their behalf? Hope that through the stiff maneuvers of interna-

tional diplomacy—treaty signings and commodity sales and cultural exchanges—some relaxation, some loosening of the seized soul, some ease will come to the murderously rigid Soviet state paranoia?

Yet we have living among us, in exile, another of the writer-witnesses, and his name is Reza Baraheni. His country is Iran, and he is chronicler of his nation's torture industry, poet of his nation's secret-police force. In this case our aesthetic response must be a shade less righteous because Iran, by all responsible accounts, is a country whose ruler we installed ourselves, and to whose health and well-being we have been devoted in all the usual ways—with our planes and tanks and computers.

“Azudi has shattered the mouths of twenty poets today,” says Baraheni, speaking in a poem of one of the shah's torturers. How do we, who as aestheticians know that politics makes bad art, judge a line like this? And which of our critics who believe that words are a tapestry and of no value except in the pretty designs they can make can deal for art's sake with the embarrassing, unobjectified, uncorrelated bitterness of a writer whose spine has been burned with an acetylene torch? What do our literature teachers say who do not grant art a political character, but who would speak to their students of *The Human Condition*? For Baraheni,

*E. L. Doctorow is the author of The Book of Daniel, Welcome to Hard Times, and Ragtime. This article is adapted from his introduction to The Crowned Cannibals, by Reza Baraheni, to be published by Random House in June.*

Solzhenitsyn, and writers in Chile, the Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea, turns out that *The Human Condition* is first of all to be made of flesh that can be torn, organs that can be violated, bones that can be fractured. In America it is or should be every writer's dream to give literature back to life. The writer-witness has the corollary problem: how to communicate to those who insulate themselves in literature the terrible inadequacy of aesthetic criteria as applied to human suffering. A problem of craft: how does the novelist, as he describes a scene of torture, keep us from closing the book—or from making patronizing distinctions between what is aesthetically successful and what is only sensational?

REZA BARAHENI is not unacquainted with the demands of high criticism. He received his Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Istanbul in 1960. His dissertation was a comparative study of Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Swinburne, and Edward Fitzgerald. Before his arrest in Iran he was professor of English and dean of students at Tehran University. He is a novelist, a poet, a translator of Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, Pound, e.e. cummings, and Camus, and is considered by many of his colleagues in Iran the virtual founder of modern literary criticism in that country.

Somehow in the inverted logic of tyrannies, achievements such as the threat to the state. And so it came to pass that Baraheni was imprisoned at





# Grapes, like children, mature at different times.

Some we gather at an early age, while the glow of summer is still on the vine. With others we sit patiently by 'til the hues of autumn manifest themselves. A sensitive and painstaking art, this parenting of grapes. Yet well worth our labor of love to produce a wine the calibre of our Johannisberg Riesling. Careful harvesting has yielded a Riesling of remarkable bouquet and truly distinguished class. Yes, we are very proud parents.



Almadén



## THE NEW POETRY

tortured for 102 days in 1973, before public opinion—generated by Amnesty International, the American PEN, and the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran—secured his release and his exile to the United States. Baraheni emerged with a new credential—he'd become a writer-witness. In "Our Mission in Aras," a poem named for a river between Iran and the Soviet Union where dissidents of both countries are rumored to have been drowned, he writes:

*A dissident poet from Russia  
whispers to me  
I whisper back  
We smile. We depart  
Soft pieces of ice pass between us.*

Another who believes all that can be thought can be written is the South Korean poet Kim Chi-ha. For his belief, he has spent most of his adult life in prison because every time he's written a poem he has offended the regime. He has been tortured, sentenced to death, had his sentence commuted to life imprisonment, been released, rearrested, and again put under a life sentence. From his solitary confinement he writes:

*Ah, to be a traveler once again,  
with loved ones  
on the wind-swept road through the  
wasteland—  
never again.*

Recently released from prison in Ghana is Kofi Awonor, the author of ten works of poetry, prose, and essays on the culture of Africa. While imprisoned he was brutalized and his hearing was damaged. In his *Songs of Sorrow* he writes:

*My people, I have been somewhere  
If I turn here the rain beats me  
If I turn there the sun burns me.*

In Indonesia, imprisoned since 1966, is the poet Sugiarti Siswandi. She has never received a trial and does not know what crime she is accused of. From her cell she writes:

*Freedom has changed the face of  
the world  
it rules the mind, the heart and the  
person  
it dispels the mist hanging over  
the mountains, the valleys  
the shores, the fields, the factories  
and the cities  
and the hearts of us, women.*

So let us propose discussion of the

idea that a new art, with its own rules, may be rising in the twentieth century, the *lieder* of victims of the state. It sings of behavior so inhuman as to call into question the idea of humanity, of regimes so repressive as to be fun-house mirror images of civilization. It recounts years of solitary confinement. It tells of pliers for pulling fingernails, it speaks of electric currents sent into sexual organs, it describes prison cells in which a person can neither stand up nor lie down. True, this is a necessarily small range of subject. There is a limit to the possibilities of metaphor. The subtext always has to do with the degrees of death in life. But within these strictures the poet is entitled to sing with his or her own voice.



ONE FEELS A certain amount of curiosity—let's call it that—for the individual who gives his life and loyalty to secret-police organizations, but especially for the trolls in that netherworld who do the actual raping, breaking, and maiming of poets. From all reports they look like ordinary human beings. One presumes that in order to do what they do they perform an act of excommunication, so that the victim of the abuse cannot be considered human and the rights of his or her person cannot be thought of as human rights. Hundreds of years ago such emotional preparation for torturing invoked the name of God. In our century it takes the name of Caesar. But quite clearly what is involved, always, is the inability of the torturers to accept their own moral designation. The knowledge of flesh, of the terrible vulnerability of the flesh, and of mind, of the fragile psychosocial constructs which support it, is a knowledge too great to be contained. Someone must be punished—mortality, the

pride of the brain and the grace of the body, must be driven back into itself. The prisoner, that pretender to life and thought and self-possession, must be taught what a broken, crawling, pleading piece of excrement it really is.

Surely such hate of self, of the very idea of oneself, is the root of the torturer's being. But there is a limit to our curiosity, if that's what it is. There are others afflicted with self-hate who do not torture—common maniacs at the worst, who rampage and kill and are apprehended and treated by one or another means society has for them. But the torturer is distinguished by being accredited by society. He is that maniac whose inhuman instincts are educated, paid, titled, and granted solemn recognition with uniform and working hours and pensions for his future. That is why the current political analysis must mean the phrase *banality of evil*—the appropriation of evil by the state, its incorporation into law, the lifting of the dark spirit of the individual from his own responsibility, leaving it shining with belief and rectitude.

Thus the new poetry can bring to character as well as event. A major technical problem is that the torturers all have the same speech, the same rationale usually worked out for themselves: their superiors (who might themselves be too delicate to witness what they do). It goes this way: "If you do not torture you do not find the terrorists. Do you think they would talk if you gave them a cigarette and a cup of tea? We ourselves are family men. We have wives and children at home and it is not pleasant for us to slice women's nipples or hang men by the testicles. But you must appreciate our enemies: they are out to bring down civilization as we know it. They would incite the population with lies printed in newspapers (if we allowed newspapers to be published) or with speeches in public places (if we allowed people to gather). They will stop at nothing. And that is why we interrogate in our prisons writers, artists, intellectuals, lawyers, doctors, teachers, or anyone who might show signs of thinking like them."

There is not much an artist can do with that—like the form of the sonnet, very strict. Nevertheless, it is always a wonder to see how a government which proposes itself as a means of creating a civilized life for people maintains



at the expense of the people. This peculiar Möbius strip of logic leads us in a twisted way to the thought that in the twentieth century all people are, by definition, the enemies of their own governments. Thus we see today in every part of the world and under every ideology, from the most left to the most right, a citizenry brought to its knees by its protectors.

THE ORGANIZATION known as Amnesty International quietly investigates and records cases of political imprisonment and torture around the world. It is one of the newer organizations we have, along with the Wildlife Fund, Save Our Species, Ban the Nuke, and so on, that together indicate the wide front of the ongoing battle human beings are waging against their own destructiveness. According to Amnesty International's report on torture published in 1974, no more than sixty countries of the world are systematically practicing torture on their political prisoners. All, presumably, are members of the United Nations, which in 1966 unanimously adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right of prisoners not to be tortured.

One can find little justification for the concept of progress and the permissibility of humankind in such grisly pocrisy. It is true, of course, that slavery in the sense of its widespread practice in the nineteenth century and before is not now an endorsed custom in most recognizable societies. This might be considered progress. But one could make the case that political imprisonment of a few is the symbolic and pragmatically effective slavery of the whole. Or that just as everything in our century has speeded up—our travel, our means of dispensing information—torture might be a kind of speeded-up slavery, a life of slavery in instant form, condensed for the sake of economic convenience, so that the victim does not have to be supported for an entire lifetime. The effect of thirty-five or forty years of unendurable labor under abominable conditions, by means of modern technology, accelerated and delivered in a yearless of intolerable pain and debasement.

In our country we do not commit atrocities upon each other in any sys-

tematic way. There is no federal policy in existence that calls for torture of dissidents, protestors, or indeed, without distinction, the contrasting majority who do not dissent or who are silent. We are a democracy. But if, like me, you live in a quiet house in a pleasant neighborhood where trees grace the yards, I can show you that if Reza Baraheni were to ring your bell or mine, and recite one of his poems to your astonished face, or mine, he would have come to the right door. You and I might by nature avoid stepping on insects, but the torturers of Iran and of Chile are as close to us as the child is to the parent. They are our being, born from our loins. A terrible connection is made with these dark exotic faraway places, these barbaric civilizations who do not have our tradition of freedom, and justice: they are ours. We made them with our Agency for International Development, and with our Office of Public Safety. We made them with our Drug Enforcement Administration and our Military Assistance Program. With our genius for public relations, we made them.

How worrisome that we who claim democracy for ourselves have to protect it by refusing to extend it to other people. One would think that the idea of partial democracy was a logical impossibility. One could as well speak of being only partly murderous. But the impossible is what we believe—logic that falls apart the instant we try to put it together—when we construed certain kinds of tyrannies in other places to be necessary to what we think of as our freedom.

Perhaps we are not free, and the reasoning here is actually consistent. Perhaps there is no freedom anywhere, a kind of domino theory, as it were, the serial connection and collapse beginning with the first imprisonment without trial, and torture, of some obscure foreigner whose thoughts are too dangerous to endure and who is imagined, in his agony, to benefit the state. Perhaps we are not tortured because we are safely docile and cheerfully buy shares in business firms which distribute with the encouragement of our government weapons of containment and devices of technological repression used by the thugs the new poets tell us of.

In *Democracy in America* Tocqueville describes what tyranny would be in a democratic nation:

*It would degrade men without tormenting them... it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood... the will... is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are consistently restrained from actions. Such power does not destroy, but it prevents existence... it stupefies people and all the nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of tamed and industrious animals.*

Perhaps in this, as in so much, the canny old Frenchman was right: If you or I do not condone torture, who among us does? If we abhor gangsters and tyrants and dictators, who among us installs them in their power? Let us have their names, who act in ours.

One reads the new poetry and wonders with a peculiar chill why there is not an ongoing national cry of protest and outrage on behalf of all tortured people everywhere. Why do we not hear from the pastors of our churches, our college presidents, and our statesmen? Where are our community spokesmen and our intellectuals and artists, our Nobel Prize winners, our scientists, our economists? Why do we not hear from our businessmen, doctors, lawyers, our labor leaders, our police chiefs? Why is there not some great concerted refusal to condone, assist, endorse, or do business with those who practice torture? Surely here is one moral issue which cannot be obscured by language, or compromised by political point of view. In the push and pull of diplomacy, the manipulation of public opinion, the granting or withholding of money and of arms, why, with our immense power, can't we put an end to torture—at least in those states, construed as our friends, that are under our influence? Surely the torture of individuals extends beyond the limit of our own barbarism, the hungers of our corporations, and our own paranoid sense of security, so that we can safely say: not this far—at least not this.

Or must we continue to watch, unconnected and stupefied, the rise of a new art form? And shall we wager how long it will be before we produce our own native practitioners? Or must we wonder with Samuel Clemens if the human race is a joke? And if it was devised and patched together in a dull time when there was nothing important to do?

||||



# CLUTCHING AT FLAWS

by John Lahr

**The Champions**, by Peter Fuller. Urizen, \$10.95.

**S**PORTS ARE as close as many Americans come to the sacred, and athletes are the high priests of this pure faith. We want champions to be different from us; they are great because they perform the extraordinary. They give us some of our most intense experience. They live for us as expressions of pure being. Our life is based on work, theirs on play. We are ruled by the clock; they break records and devote their lives to "wasting time." They remind us of the playfulness we've traded for "progress." When the champion performs, he does not discuss or analyze or reminisce. He exists gorgeously in his moment and kills time for us so that each moment is enlarged and memorable. From champions we want action, not words. Language is shared by Everyman; it trivializes the hero—unless, of course, he is a Muhammad Ali and speaks in tongues, making language match the size of his undertaking. "Speed?" Ali said of Liston. "He faster'n the wind. He kiss a bullet. He run through hell in a gasoline sport coat and live to talk about it."

Peter Fuller in *The Champions* is not satisfied with the poetry of an athlete's accomplishment but promises in his subtitle "The Secret Motives in Games and Sports." Technique abhors a secret, and psychology won't let any mysterious experience alone without imposing its own mysterious categories on it and calling them fact. We will have the Oedipal conflicts of Bobby Fischer, Muhammad Ali, El Cordobes, Jackie Stewart, and the Campbells (*père et fils*) exposed, analyzed, and ingeniously manipulated so that their personalities fit the Freudian mold, thus proving that the only person who can defeat the champion, who can both win and lose at once, is the psychologist himself.

*The Champions* is a hilarious book, a strange word for such an unsmiling, clever, and weighty tome, but how else does one describe the sense of giddy rage and delight in so frequently encountering the psychologist at play on the sports track: "The undulating course, with its curving bends, may represent the mother—conquered by the driver with his phallic car." It may, and it may not. Psychology never takes don't know for an answer.

*John Lahr is at work on a biography of the playwright Joe Orton.*

**S**PORTS ARE a legitimized arena for violence and vindictive triumph, and Fuller provides the reader with fascinating accounts of how anxiety is displaced effectively and not so effectively by champions. Alexander Alekhine, the world chess champion from 1927 to 1935 and 1937 to 1946, given to pronouncing "I dominate them all," exhibited enough irrational behavior at his matches for even Archie Bunker to finger him as a basket case. Alekhine wins the award for the most outrageous exhibition of omnipotence. At one tournament, he urinated on the chessboard. Bobby Fischer's hermetic life and paranoid behavior also nicely in here. "Chess is life," Fischer has said; and he has continually defended himself against the instinctual threat of castration by shrinking the world around him and thereby sustaining chess's fantasy of the omnipotent mind over experience. Fischer, who never knew his father and who was dominated by his mother, turns castrator on the chessboard. "I like to make them squirm," he has said. "I like to watch their egos crumble." Chess is a paradigm of the Oedipal war, "checkmate" the translation from Persian of "The king is dead." Fischer's great innova-





in chess tactics—the maneuver that made him the supremo of the game—is sacrificing the queen to get the king. Having elaborated Fischer's million against his left-wing mother, Fuller positively *kvells* when he reveals her first name is Regina. We have psychoanalytic lift-off!

The principles of dynamic psychology can make us understand Ali better," Fuller says. Really? Ali's sense of omnipotence is no secret to the world. "The Resurrector," he has said. "The man who beats me will be remembered like the man who shot Liberty Bells." Ali carries immortality in his pocket. He has made an epic of his life and his athletic exploits. "I'm livin' movie every day," Ali says brilliantly. Predicting (in poetry, of course) the rounds of his knockouts, boasting his power like a Herculean figure in the tall tales of the American frontier. Ali has made the world believe in his invincibility and has lived up to it. "When I say I'm the greatest, you better believe it. A lot of imagination goes into it."

Fuller shows us the young Louisville fighter trying on the one hand to live up to the expectations of his daydreaming father (he was Cassius Marcellus, his mother was Rudolph Valentino); and at the same time terrified of his womanizing "hep-cat" father, who was given to violent behavior and who reportedly "beat" Ali on the thigh in one family squabble. "It wasn't long before I knew the kid was scared to death of his father," Ali's first coach is quoted as saying. Ali's mother recalls: "He was afraid of nothing but a fur piece like a collar on a coat, and if you told him we were gonna get the fur piece you wouldn't have any trouble out of him." Fuller doesn't discuss the grace and rhythm of the Ali shuffle, but give him a textbook clue like a pelt and he goes into his own Freudian shuffle. The fur collar, he says, represents the female genitals. "Like most little boys, he may have conceived of the mother as having been castrated by the father.... Symbolism of her private parts provoked anxiety because they reminded him of the castration which he believed his father would inflict on him if he did not maintain his impotence."

Fuller sees Ali's puritanical nature behind his obsession with "being the greatest, superior to anybody, best in my field, complexionwise, features, health, good

as any man or better" as a clear-cut vanquishing of the "bad" father. "I'm the king!" Ali shouted after defeating that epitome of badness (and 7-to-1 favorite) Sonny Liston for the heavyweight title, reminding his mother afterward: "Didn't I say I was the greatest?" Fuller is at pains to show Ali's not-so-masked terror. His prefight outrageousness was matched by a pulse that was beating, according to the medical officer, 110 to the normal 70. He was clinically "scared to death." In the ring, like many athletes, Ali was victimized by irrational fears: first that his water was poisoned, then that he was going blind. Even though a caustic lotion on Liston's cut eyes could easily have gotten on Ali's gloves and caused the severe momentary eyesight problems, Fuller prefers to clutch at flaws: "There is evidence, however, to suggest that Clay had displaced the idea of phallic struggle onto the eyes so that blindness symbolized castration to him." Are these secrets or guesses? Finally, Ali is bigger than the sum of his complexes.

Psychology dissects but can never explain the mysterious constellation of talent, wit, grace, and spirit which makes the great performer. The world needs magic; and champions, by giving glimpses of the incredible, provide the public with images of the body transcendent. The accomplishments of champions are reminders of the boundaries of human endeavor, the mystery surrounding both the gift of life and human attainment. Why else would a theater full of London fight fans refuse to evacuate their seats after a bomb threat, preferring death to missing the Ali-Foreman fight? We need the renewal of heroic fantasy. Champions perform exemplary acts. They cheat death; they defy normal behavior; they win with a vengeance which gives the public both a sense of its deepest violence and its greatest hope.

Every dogma has its day. Psychology has replaced magic as our answer to forces we don't understand and are helpless to combat. It wants to explain everything, and those who question its pseudoscientific reasons are branded "defensive." Champions irritate the psychological spirit because the magic which makes them great is ultimately unanalyzable. Fuller, faced with this frustration, attacks his subject with analytic overkill. The spectacle of the

sports epic is reduced to kitchen-shrink drama:

*If the racing car is the phallus, then motor racing may be a substitute for masturbation.... The "coil spring/damper units," the "tubular extension" which passes over the driver's legs, "cockpits," "swinging members," and the "rubber bag fuel tanks" and their location all immediately indicate the male genitals. We can even suggest comparable functions, linking suspension with the erectile tissue; getting into gear, transmission and propulsion with erection and penile movement; exhaust with urination; lubrication with discharge of genital secretions; and winning a race with ejaculation.*

*The Champions* suffers from the pathetic phallus. Basically, Fuller is a couch quarterback, a fan who is the sophisticated extreme of the old locker-room voyeur. For this athletes, not psychologists, have the right word—"pecker checker."

## ARISTOCRATIC REBEL

by Edmund White

**Matters of Fact and of Fiction: Essays 1973-76**, by Gore Vidal. Random House, \$10.

GORE VIDAL as an essayist accomplishes what so many Victorian novelists set out to do—to entertain and to edify. He is always funny and often witty. His paradoxes at their best rival Oscar Wilde's best; in speaking about the observations of a nineteenth-century Englishman on the American character, Vidal says: "Since Mr. Dixon was a journalist of absolutely no distinction, one must take very seriously what he says because he only records the obvious."

Although Vidal is distinguished, he is not afraid to be obvious. At least, he is willing to discuss first principles clearly—a rare treat in the United States, where, as Vidal points out, our spokesmen prefer to uncover scandals rather than to question basic premises. Of course, when Vidal—urbane, informed,

*Edmund White is the author of Forgetting Elena.*



## BOOKS

sly—harps on the Big Questions, we hear celestial music. For instance, he writes:

*I fear the United States has always been a nation of ongoing hustlers from the prisons and disaster-areas of old Europe. Our grand British heritage is now wearing thin but still can be observed in our racism as well as in the spontaneous hypocrisy with which our public men respond to inconvenient disclosures and the self-serving rhetoric that swirls about them in time of crisis like squid's ink.*

You see, it's all a matter of having the right accent—the hieratic use of the demotic “hustlers,” the witty “spontaneous” and “inconvenient,” and the literary touch of “squid's ink.” The ideas, however, are obvious enough. But where else in America could they be read? Well, in a Marxist throw-away, but when the prole pamphleteer paraphrases the same content (“America historically has been the land of adventurers drawn from the lowest strata of urban and agrarian workers, many of them criminal outcasts, and even today the nation's prevailing ethos remains one of official hypocrisy designed to perpetuate myths of ‘rugged individualism’ despite the obvious realities of class conflict”), a nictitating membrane automatically falls over our eyes and everything goes dim.

Vidal's entertainment, then, does edify us about: the horrors of American history (“We killed three million Filipinos, the largest single act of genocide until Hitler”); the perils of West Point, an institution that breeds an elite that places Duty (to other officers) and Honor (to army rules) before Country; and the sinister domestic and foreign dealings of conglomerates. Vidal argues

that there is only one party in America, the Property party—“and it has two wings: Republican and Democrat. Republicans are a bit stupider, more rigid, more doctrinaire in their laissez-faire capitalism than the Democrats, who are cuter, prettier, a bit more corrupt. . . .” He reads this view of the primacy of property back into the founding of the country and the writing of the Constitution and traces out the conflict between noble ideals and personal greed in the lives of the Adams family, U.S. Grant, and Robert Moses.

Bracing (and hygienic) as Vidal's opinions are, they sometimes are too clever to be true, too hasty to take time for real complexities. For instance, Vidal assumes entertainingly enough that the “United States has always been a corrupt society” and that the corruption originates with the Founding Fathers (or the “Inventors,” as he calls them), men who “believed profoundly in the sacredness of property and the necessary dignity of those who owned it.” The virtue (from a journalistic point of view) of positing vice (as the basis of American politics) is that the notion can be presented with brevity and éclat and is cynical enough to be readily believed. But the notion ignores the intellectual side of the Federalist era. Edmund S. Morgan, for example, argues persuasively that for the Federalists politics had replaced theology as “the most challenging area of human thought,” and that these men “addressed themselves to the rescue, not of souls, but of governments, from the perils of human nature.” In short, the Federalists feared human nature but believed in the possibility of guarding against it through a science of politics. The same fear of inherent human evil was characteristic, moreover, of the Antifederalists as well, and what divided the two groups was not a disagreement over the primacy of property but over the question of how large government could grow before succumbing to the malign temptations of power.

Since this pessimistic preoccupation with political corruption as a version of sin sounds so remarkably like Vidal's own approach to national affairs, I'm struck by his lack of sensitivity to the Inventors' moral concerns. If I am dwelling on the founding of the Republic, I do so only to isolate an unexamined determinism that seems to run through-

out Vidal's politics. America was founded to protect property, and it's still in the grip of ITT and the Rockefeller, Vidal tells us. True enough, but even a partial understanding of how this state of affairs came about requires a look at the conscious values of the Americans of different epochs. Let me hasten to add that when Vidal does write about particular individuals in history, whether they are U.S. Grant or E. Howard Hunt, he is extraordinarily alert to their ideas, values, foibles, and quirks of vanity (Grant, according to Vidal, winked at graft because he “became obsessed by the generosity of England to Marlborough and to Wellington and by the niggardliness of the United States to its unique savior”).

When he turns to contemporary fiction, Vidal is too dogmatic for my taste. “American Plastic: The Matter of Fiction,” his survey of several living American writers, is as exhilarating as Marjorie's look at the “competition” many years ago in *Advertisements for Myself* and twice as funny, though Vidal is less candid about his own competitiveness. Granted, Vidal, unlike them, does recognize that technique is more important than “themes” and plot more interesting than “influences.” But how could he have placed Italo Calvino (to whom he devotes a long, worshipping essay) above Thomas Pynchon? Throughout his examination of American fiction Vidal appears to be uneasy about experimentation. Join the crowd. We are at a peculiar point in art history (even the concept of “art history” now seems suspect). Traditional fiction is dull. Attacks on the avant-garde are philistine. The avant-garde is in disarray and infected with self-doubt. Occasionally a new masterpiece surfaces in one of the arts, and it has usually been created by someone who considers himself to be avant-garde. What can be made of these contradictions eludes me, but Vidal has not approached a serious question seriously.

These quibbles aside, I should add that I have not enjoyed a book of essays so much since Susan Sontag's *Against Interpretation*. For two weeks I've been going about muttering to imaginary Vidal; he has become companion to my thoughts and caused me to weigh and test them, which, at all, is what an essay means to do.

HARPER'S/MAY 1978



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continued from page 42) no more than a third of the 1776 population supported the Revolution. It may be a sign of something more than the social backgrounds of the members of the Boston bar that most of them remained loyalists. (Indeed, modern scholarship has shown that a millennial urge to create a new Jerusalem, in the belief that the Revolution was the fulfillment of the Book of Revelation, underlay at least some of the participation in the American Revolution; this obviously creates further difficulties for those who return to the "old dream" or the "secular religion" of the American Revolution.) \*

Bickel and modern adherents of the "rule of law" are rarely willing to defend activity directed against the state in the name of laws no longer recognized by rulers (including courts). Like judges, instead, they define law in terms of the officials of the state itself. If law is *only* that which the courts are prepared to enforce or political leaders are prepared to recognize, then it becomes impossible, by definition, to accuse those in authority of disobeying the law. A legal theory more protective of established authority could hardly be constructed.

The only theory of rule of law really worth having faith in, I think, is one recognizing the necessity for a linkage

Since so much of this article is about law as a component of civil religion, it might be worthwhile to extend the analogy to Protestant and Catholic conceptions of the Constitution. One of the fundamental paradoxes of American life is that this otherwise Protestant country has adopted a Catholic jurisprudence. That is, if we define Protestantism as resting in part on the supremacy of the Bible and the rejection of institutional mediation between the individual and the Holy Scriptures (i.e., the priesthood of all believers), then we might have expected this country to have adopted a fundamentally anti-institutional theory of the Constitution, by which it would be up to each individual to interpret this secular holy document for himself (i.e., the lawyerhood of all citizens). What has happened, however, is that we have placed the Supreme Court in a position directly analogous to that of the pope, for law (and therefore the rule of law) becomes defined as obedience to interpretations of the Supreme Court, quite independent of any requirement that the citizen actually be persuaded of the correctness of its opinions. Suggestion that the rule of law does not entail devotion to specific institutional authority is met with the same incomprehension that greeted Martin Luther's attacks on papal authority.

between law and moral norms and, in turn, for the popular evaluation of existing political institutions and leaders by reference to such norms. But this is the theory quickest to be rejected by most modern thinkers. Not only does such a notion assume a moral consensus which no longer exists, it also looks toward the possibility of taking the law into our own hands when public officials refuse to be guided by it. Although it is only by this notion that even the legalistic theories of the American Revolution can be defended, most of us today regard even its suggestion as synonymous with a call for lynching parties. But if we cannot take the law into our own hands, then how can we be confident of living under the rule of law, unless we transform that notion simply into acceptance of the claims of political and judicial officials?

### A reconsidered passion

**M**ORE THAN fifty years ago, before his own affirmation of the more traditional faiths of classicism, royalism, and Anglo-Catholicism, T. S. Eliot penned his own warning to those who look to the past for authority:


*History has many cunning passages,  
contrived corridors  
And issues, deceives with whispering  
ambitions,  
Guides us by vanities. Think now  
She gives when our attention is  
distracted  
And what she gives, gives with such  
supple confusions  
That the giving famishes the  
craving. Gives too late  
What's not believed in, or if still  
believed,  
In memory only, reconsidered  
passion.*

Professor Bickel's own paean to law as "the value of values," where the specific content of values is left undefined, is, I think, symptomatic of our contemporary intellectual bankruptcy. We are all like Graham Greene's priests, without the genuine requisites of faith but unwilling to give up that which provides some linkage, however tenuous, to a dimly remembered ordered universe.

The vision of the rule of law was surely a magnificent and worthy one, for it evoked a world in which individual selfishness could be tamed by an ability to engage in a common effort to

achieve a common good. We should feel no pride in rejecting such a vision, but we must recognize that we no longer inhabit a world in which the notion can be used as a description of reality, as anything other than, at best, a "reconsidered passion." The return to power under President Carter of some of the people who participated in the illegalities of the Johnson Administration is evidence of the rather limited impact of Watergate on any return to legal and moral fidelity as a standard for holding high government office. It will take more than "new faith in the old dream" to restore the American government to a position where it will merit the devotion of its citizenry. ■■■■

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#### Solution to the April Puzzle

#### Notes for "Headhunting"

The unclued lights are, appropriately enough, HEADLESS, HORSEMAN and ICHABOD CRANE.

**Across:** 6. Eton (note, reversal); 11. bleachers, two meanings; 12. st.-raddles, anagram; 13. garbs, anagram; 15. (drib)bled; 16. p(O-stul)ate; 17. writer (righter); 18. slaver, two meanings; 24. scotch, two meanings; 27. birdie, anagram; 28. en(sconce)d; 30. l(o)ath; 32. a(pis)h, reversal; 33. westerner, anagram; 34. creation anagram; 35. me-sh(e). **Down:** 1. theatric, anagram; 2. sab-bath, bas(e), reversal; 3. s(crew)-ledge; 4. head-strong; 5. (p)ushers; 6. stella-r.; 7. B-one; 8. be(rat)e; 9. snide, anagram; 10. ferric, pun, iron-y, hidden; 14. dup(L.I.)cator, anagram; 15. brethren-N.; 21. hatch-et; 22. M(aim)ing; 23. unease, hidden; 25. esteem, anagram; 26. scorc(reversal)-(beac)h; 28. preens, anagram of "presen(t)"; 29. snare (Luth)erans, reversal; 31. (g)alas.



# PUZZLE

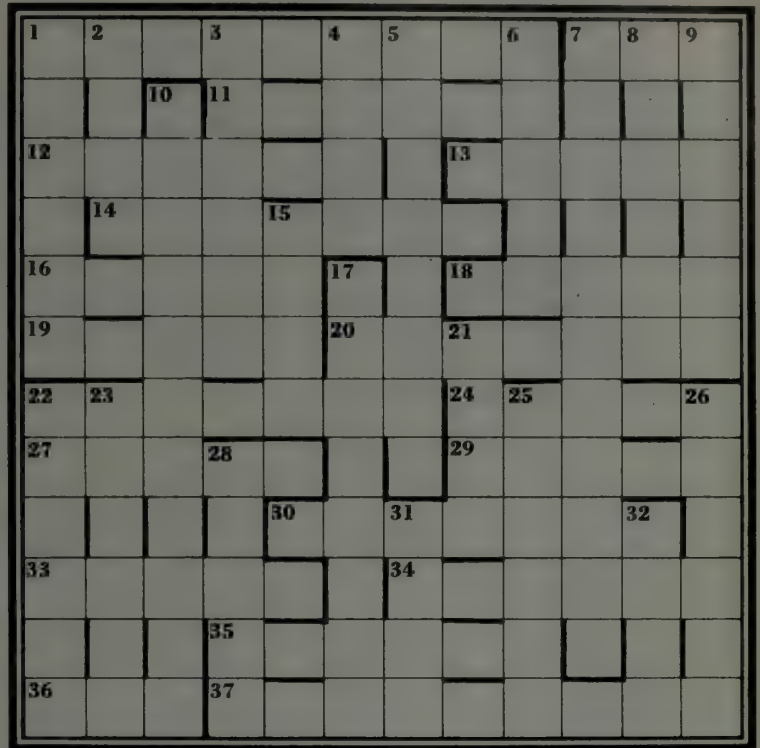
## THEME AND VARIATIONS

E. R. Galli and Richard Maltby, Jr.

**This month's instructions:** Twelve entries in the diagram are clued, consisting of three Theme-words—A, B, and C—which are related to each other in a way you must discover, and three variations on each Theme-word. Each group of "variations" is related to its Theme-word in a different manner (e.g., if Theme-word A were TAR, its variations might be TOR and SALT; and if Theme-word B were FEATHER, its variations might be EXPLOIT and SHE (FEAT = EXPLOIT; HER SHE)).

There are five proper names, one common foreign word, and one combining form among the clued answers. 24 Across is an uncommon word. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 102.



### CLUES

#### ACROSS

- Variation on Theme-word C (9)
- Variation on Theme-word C (3)
- Exact satisfaction—you'll find it in Geneva (6)
- I'm a bit like trunks (6)
- Sing Robert initially in *Company*, performing now (5)
- American in Paris, traveling around part of Germany (7)
- Debaucheries conceal what's dear to the French (5)
- Variation on Theme-word B (5)
- This girl is a type that first takes wing (5)
- Variation on Theme-word A (7)
- In total, one plus one is taken back... it sticks in the throat (7)
- Caucasian, so backward and persistent (5)
- Variation on Theme-word B (5)
- Mad whaler captures one, returning from Brazilian port (5)
- Lesson 1: rebuilding shoe parts (7)
- Europeans, but as comprehended by Sue they're Africans (5)
- Hardy companion for evergreen (6)
- Part of quarrel is terrible to enumerate a second time (6)
- Variation on Theme-word A (3)
- He logs small initial leads in *Sleeper* (9)

### DOWN

- 1. Theme-word C (6)
- 2. Ring up an expression of contempt (4)
- 3. Kind disposition (6)
- 4. Queen who shows no meanness? Just the opposite! What disorder (4)
- 5. Rag doll, without love, chewed up—but it keeps you well (8)
- 6. Variation on Theme-word B (5)
- 7. Fine meal belongs to the lady—and people who flaunt things (11)
- 8. Stir up our sea snakes (6)
- 9. Theme-word A (6)
- 10. To raise a kind of orange and to go astray in very cold environment is a matter of no importance (11)
- 15. Vice and love become the form for a Chinaman... (4)
- 17. ...we hear he escaped infection! (5, 3)
- 21. Ring to throw easily over wolf (4)
- 22. A team's offhand remarks (6)
- 23. To become a military secretary, I become dashed, follow aide and leave quickly (6)
- 25. Praise could make us late (6)
- 26. Variation on Theme-word A (6)
- 28. Theme-word B (5)
- 31. Variation on Theme-word C (4)
- 32. Prophet sounds dry and shriveled (4)

### CONTEST RULES

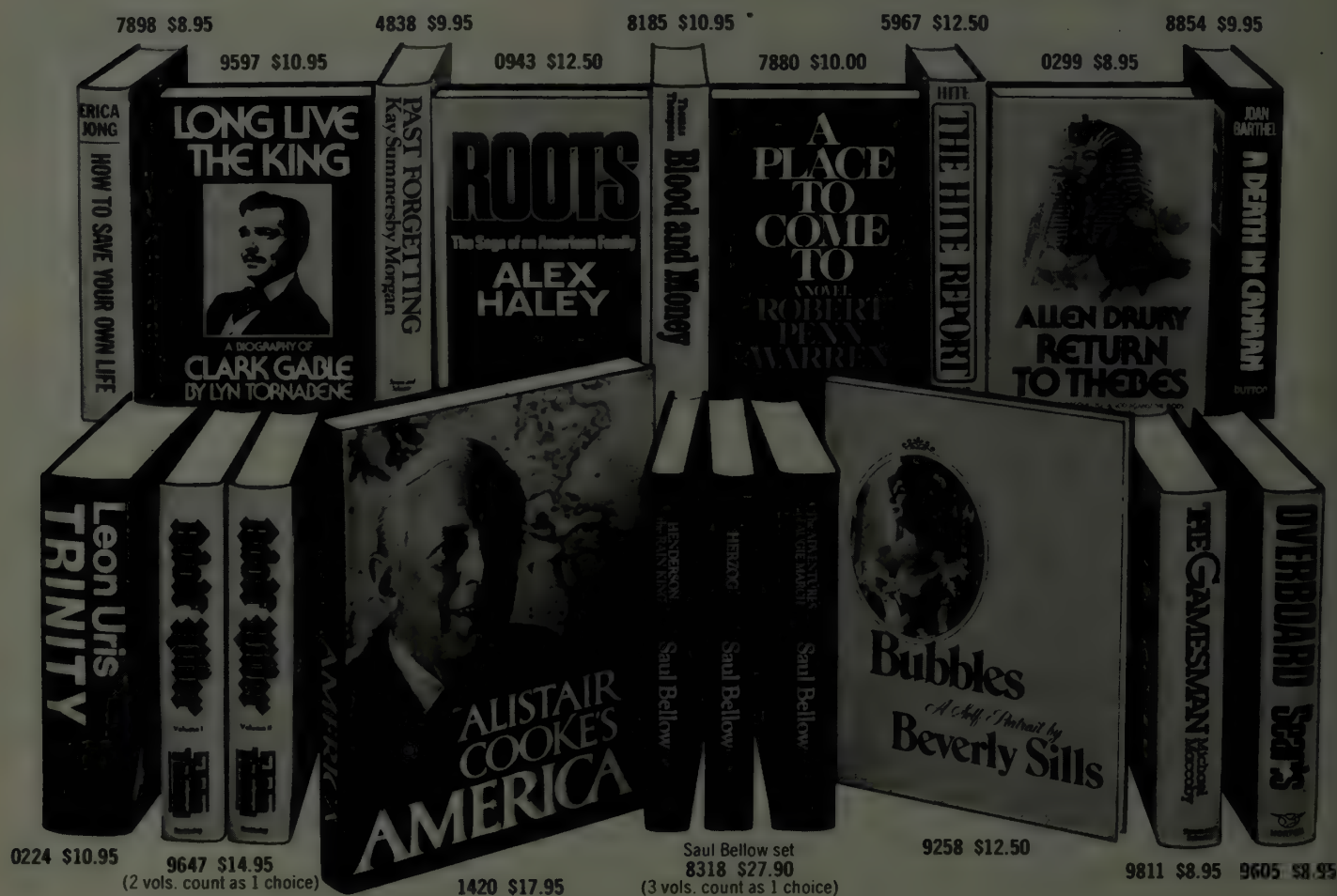
Send completed diagram with name and address to Theme and Variations, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by May 10. Send-in of the first three correct solutions opened will receive a

one-year subscription to *Harper's*. The solution will be printed in the June issue. Winners' names will be printed in the July issue. Winners of the March puzzle, "Crazy Quilt," are Michael C. Steese, Rensselaer, New York; Sandra Kamin, Chicago, Illinois; and Daniel Ling, Lawrence, Kansas.



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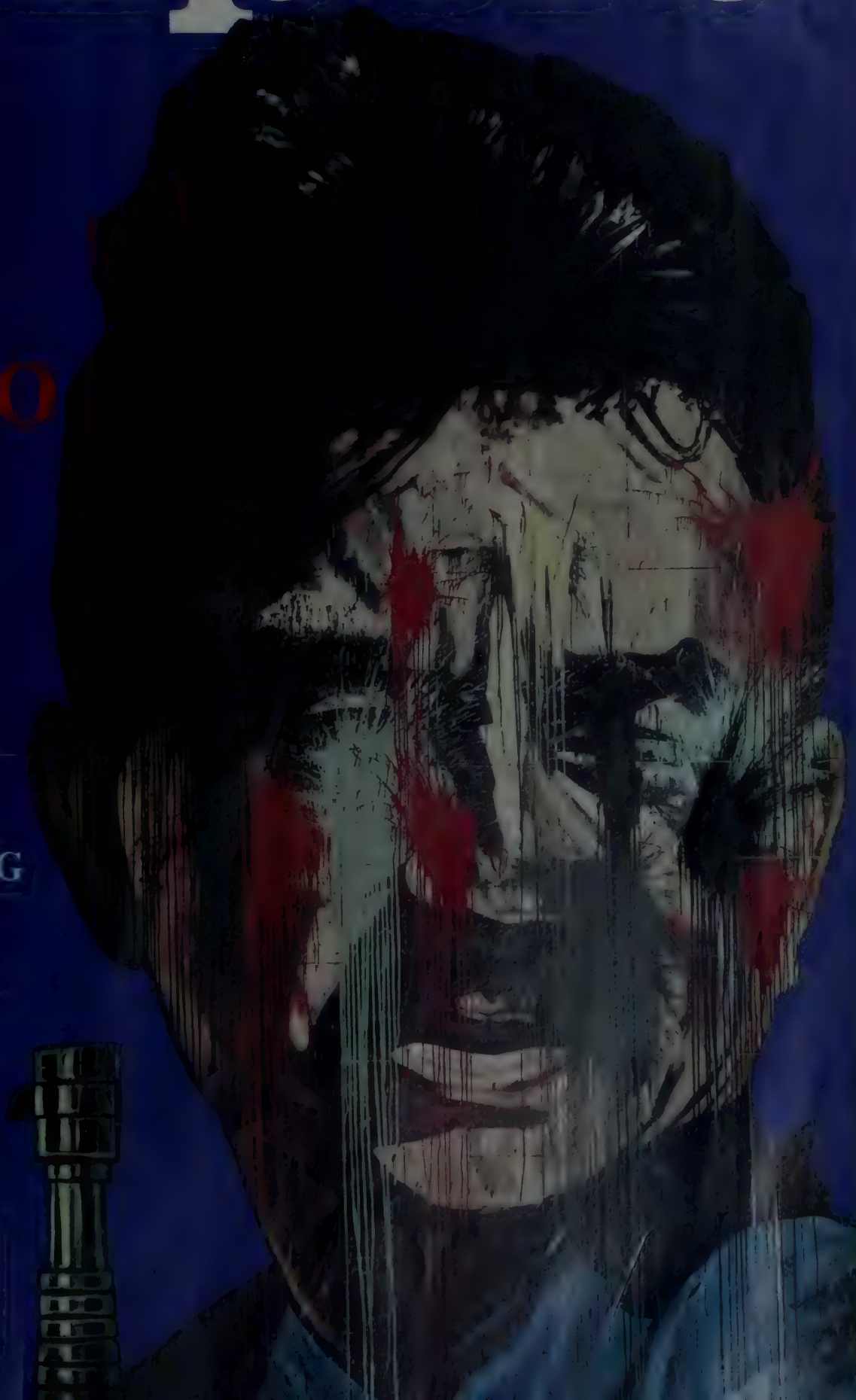
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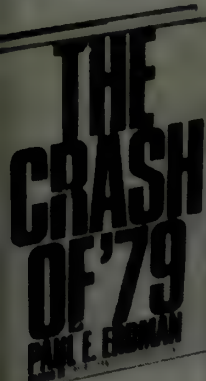
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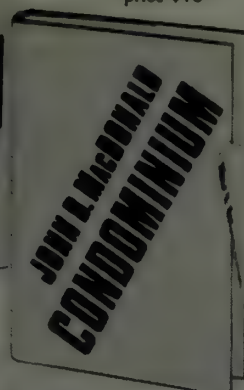
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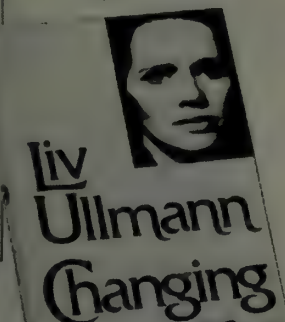
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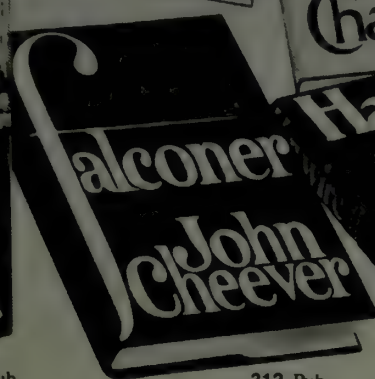
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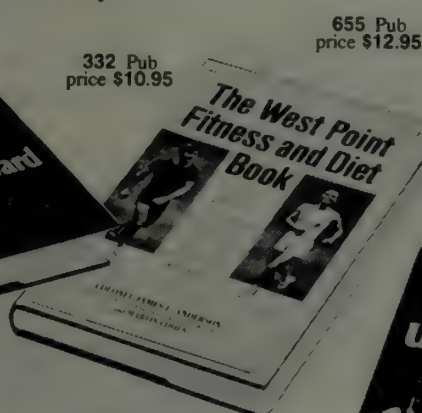


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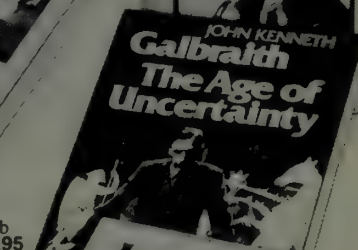


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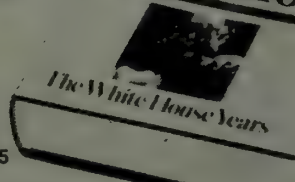


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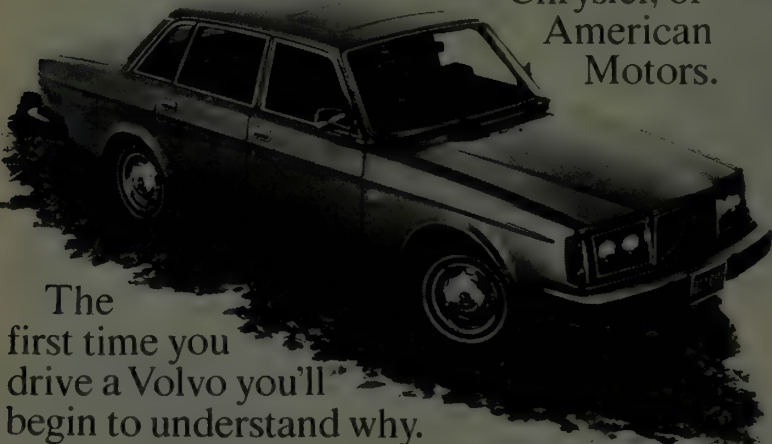
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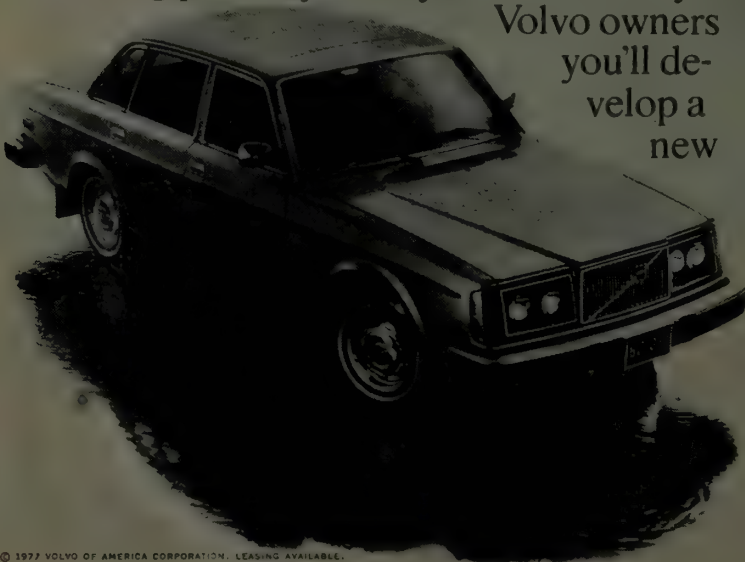
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 the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, Inc. John Cowles, Jr., Chairman; Otto A. Silha, President;  
 Donald R. Dwight, Vice President; Charles W. Arnason, Secretary; William R. Beattie, Treasurer. Subscrip-  
 tions: \$8.97 one year. Foreign except Canada and Pan America: \$1.50 per year additional.  
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# LETTERS

## Presidential psychohistory

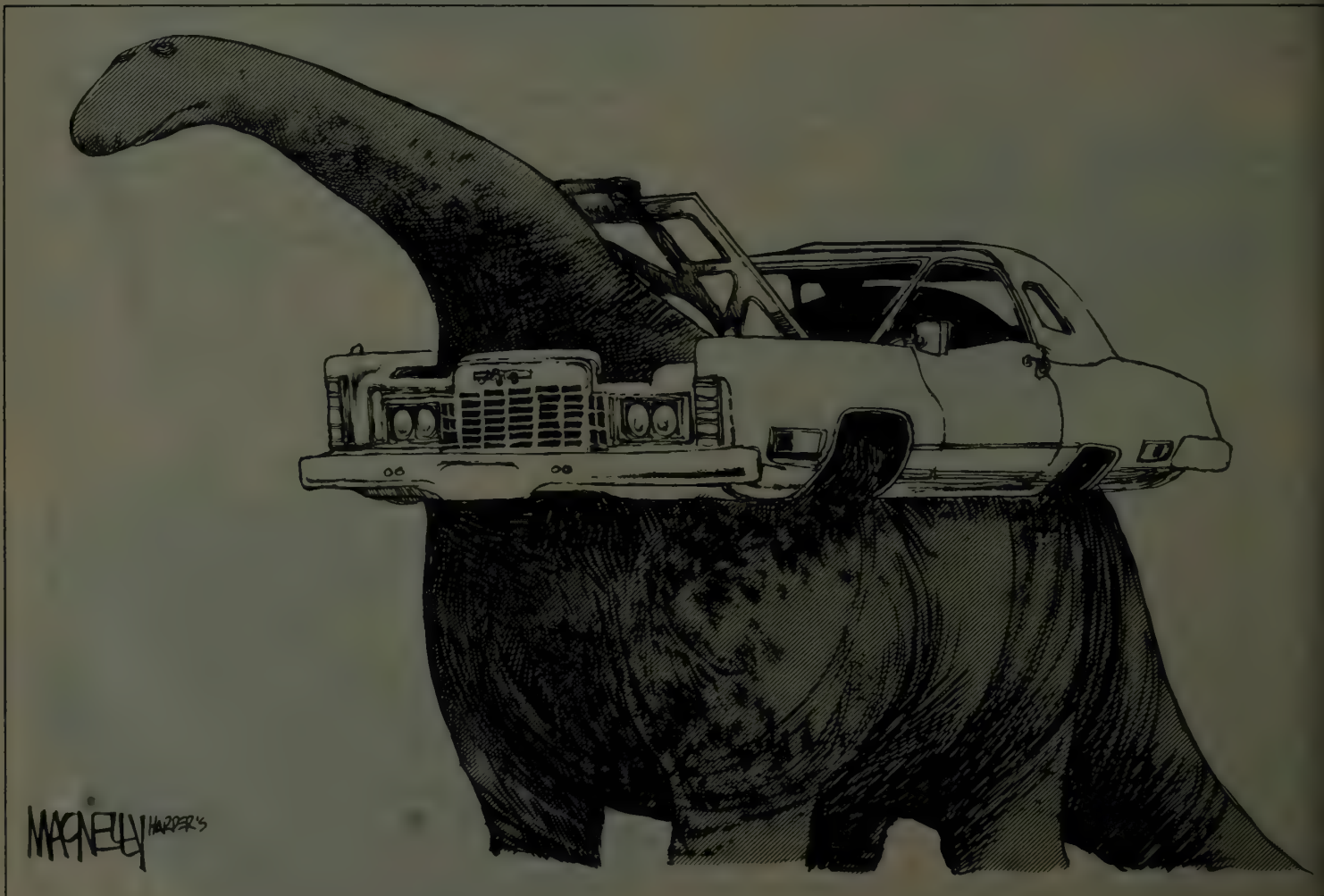
Psychohistory is a high-risk game. Fawn Brodie ["Hidden Presidents," April] discerns that Lyndon Johnson was "despite himself, triumphant" upon succeeding the slain President Kennedy in 1963. This from the title of Johnson's first chapter in *The Vantage Point*, called "The Beginning." One might demur that, since *The Vantage Point* is about Johnson's Presidency, the title is more conventional than loaded with psychological freight.

But her analysis is worse than speculative. It does a disservice to Johnson, and misjudges his relationship with Kennedy.

Brodie writes of "the hatred between the two men, for which there is abundant proof from other sources." There is no such "proof," because the men did not hate one another. Between 1956 and 1963, I heard Johnson speak of Kennedy many times, never with animosity. He was jealous of Kennedy's success in winning the 1960 Democratic nomination; he was frustrated by the inherent limitations of the Vice-Presidency; he was rebuffed by Kennedy's staff and by Robert Kennedy, and resented it; but he was meticulously faithful to, and sympathetic toward, John Kennedy. He was fond of Kennedy. I believe it was mutual. They were quite different men, but each saw much to admire in the other.

I was in Johnson's company several times during the two weeks following Kennedy's assassination. In the beginning, grief and shock marked his face as it did the nation's. How much derived in his case from the loss of a friend, and how much from sensing bitterness and suspicion that many people felt toward him at that time could not guess. Certainly his task was intimidating: to establish the legitimacy of his administration of government in the wake of the elected leader's murder in Johnson's home state.

As his gigantic energies and persuasive powers made themselves felt, as he won the cooperation of friend and foe, as he showed his unparalleled grasp of Congressional politics, he became

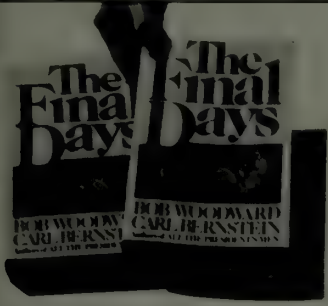




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## LETTERS

uberant: not "triumphant" in his succession to the Presidency, but exultant in his abilities and in the country's response. I did not see him, then or later, displaying "ambivalence"—Brodie's term—over Kennedy's death. He was horrified by it. But in time horror gave way to the emotions that arise in gifted men upon meeting an epochal challenge.

HARRY MCPHERSON  
Washington, D.C.

Fawn Brodie is apparently a writer who is building a reputation on tearing down Presidents she never knew. This is her right, of course, and there are many things she could say about any President which would be just and fair criticism, but to use the word "triumphant" to describe LBJ in the wake of the Kennedy assassination is outrageous and irresponsible writing.

I was there and the horror and revulsion he felt for the ghastly act, the overwhelming sympathy he felt for the widow, the personal sorrow for the golden young President he had known and admired and helped along through his years in Congress, and his own fright at the awesome task of lifting up a horrified and heartbroken nation were what I witnessed.

Perhaps Mrs. Johnson described that moment best. In an interview with Howard K. Smith shortly before leaving the White House in 1969, he asked what her feelings had been that day she moved in—December 7, 1963—two weeks after the assassination.

Her reply was: "An overwhelming sympathy for the family that had been struck and a sympathy beyond expression for my husband. I don't suppose in all history there ever was another President who saw the man he had served assassinated in front of his own eyes, and in his own state. It was a wound, and it was very hard. I realized that my sympathy must go on through the years with an increasing understanding—that the world must go on, and we must go on with the world."

LIZ CARPENTER  
Austin, Texas

I hesitate to quarrel with Fawn Brodie. I respect her and thoroughly enjoyed her biography of Jefferson. But I do protest her trying to prove—based entirely on the fact that the first chapter of Lyndon Johnson's memoirs was titled "The Beginning"—that Johnson

was "triumphant" over John Kennedy's assassination. This is an unfortunate example of jumping to erroneous conclusions and coming up with bad psychohistory.

Here are the facts, based on my knowledge as editor of the late President's memoirs, *The Vantage Point*.

Originally, the first chapter of the memoirs contained all of the material later contained in chapters one and two. It began in Fort Worth, the day of the assassination, and ended on Christmas Eve, thirty-three frantic days later. The chapter was titled "I feel like I have already been here a year," based on a remark Mr. Johnson made at his first press conference as President.

Later, however, the publisher felt that the chapter was too long and recommended dividing it into two chapters. This was done, and the events in Dallas on November 22 became chapter one. The first thirty-three days as President became chapter two.

At this point, the new chapter one was titled "Dallas."

Still later, the publisher expressed some dissatisfaction with the title "Dallas" and suggested instead "The Beginning." Mr. Johnson, with neither enthusiasm nor reluctance, accepted the suggested change.

Now, six years later, it seems grossly unfair—not to say ridiculous—to call the late President "triumphant" over the assassination because of a chapter title that someone else thought up.

ROBERT L. HARDESTY  
Austin, Texas

### FAWN BRODIE REPLIES:

Both Liz Carpenter and Harry McPherson have misread what I wrote about Lyndon Johnson. I was writing not about triumph but about ambivalence. No one was more horrified than Johnson about the manner of his becoming President. "I took the oath," he told Doris Kearns. "I became President. But for millions of Americans I was still illegitimate, a naked man with no Presidential covering, a pretender to the throne, an illegal usurper" (quoted in *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, page 170). This does not mean that Johnson did not eventually enjoy being President, nor feel a sense of triumph, not at the assassination, but that his fondest dreams had, after all, been realized. For this there is abundant evidence.

I admit error in attributing psychological importance to the title of the first chapter of *The Vantage Point* and I am grateful to Robert Hardesty for setting the record straight.

The title of my article, "Hidden Presidents," was created by *Harper's* editors without consulting me. Originally it had been "The Perils of Presidential Autobiography." The perils of interpreting a modern Presidential autobiography, often a production have thus been further underlined. I am grateful for the chance to make an essential correction.

## Twenty years after

In "Home Thoughts from Abroad" [April], Paul Jonas begins with a candid and refreshing self-retrospect.

Yet he then proceeds to complain that "interest dwindled" in him and his colleagues, that he had perforce to take up life in "this joyless society haunted by the Puritan ethic and wholly inexpert in the art of loving, living and laughing." He concludes with a standard desperate appeal to posterity: "History will not remember us as successful immigrants but as exiles, miserable, unhappy, and failed." Somehow my eyes remained dry, having read the author's account of the perquisites he enjoys as a tenured American academic. I thought, for example, of countless Palestinian exiles, whose genuine misery and failure do often nearly move me to tears (of which as an American I am assumed by Mr. Jonas to be incapable). The writer's nostalgia for Europe as a place presumably "expert in full vitality—a myth so common among Europeans that even Americans often believe it themselves—reveals, believe, the real premise of "Home Thoughts": namely, Jonas's desire once again to be considered special, his determination to blame his ordinariness on a hackneyed view of a country which has treated him rather well.

SYDNEY LEA  
Lyme, N.H.

### PAUL JONAS REPLIES:

I tried to demonstrate the state of mind of an exile. Mr. Lea's eyes remain dry because I am living the life of a tenured academic and do not experience the genuine misery of countless Palestinians. But material comfort



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do not necessarily provide happiness. They certainly do not yield mental satisfaction for a genuine political exile. I am a happy, grateful immigrant, but a miserable exile.

### Critic criticized

Sally Helgesen in "Visions of Futures Past" [March] refers to her desire for accuracy. "I answered him that my own taste was for accuracy, although I realized the obvious drawback of this preference: that it necessitates a regard not only for facts, but for the relationship between those facts." Fair enough.

Since she claims to be quoting me rather extensively in this article, I have been given a splendid opportunity to test her statement. Unfortunately, it doesn't hold up. Some examples:

1. It is true, just as Miss Helgesen states, that I first met Bill Thompson as a result of reading his book *At the Edge of History*, which Christopher Lehmann-Haupt of the *New York Times* had given a superb review. But Miss Helgesen must have stopped listening at that point. Contrary to what she writes, Thompson and I knew one another some time before we ever discussed a community. Further, our first thoughts on the community were not to prepare the world for a "new planetary culture." They were substantially more modest, as Miss Helgesen could have easily discovered had she bothered to read the prospectus.

2. I did not "go back to New York" to use my "connections to raise money." I didn't have any "connections." I knew no one in the foundation world. I started out cold banging on foundation doors. They were slow to open.

3. Nancy Wilson Ross and Mrs. Stanley Young, whom Miss Helgesen represents as being two different people, are one and the same. Further, that Miss Ross is a very well-known author could have simply been determined by a glance at *Who's Who*. Since I think of Miss Ross not only as a dear friend but, in her public role, first and foremost as a writer as acclaimed for her fiction as for her writing on Asian religions, I very much doubt that I described her to Miss Helgesen solely as "at the Asia Society." The more so since she is not "at the Asia Society"; she serves on its board. Nor is it likely that I referred to her as "Mrs. Stanley

Young, a wealthy woman" as Miss Helgesen would have me say, since I do not in fact think of her as "wealthy." I did say she gave me a wealth of good advice.

4. As to the Laniers, I can think of nothing less likely than my referring to them as "heirs of the poet." I believe poets have a poor reputation for wealth. As to Sidney and Jean being "unofficial gurus," as Miss Helgesen would have it, I don't know how you tell an official one from an unofficial one, and I doubt that she does either.

As far as Miss Lanier being "known in fund-seeking circles as a key to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund," that is news to me as it is, I am sure, to her. My first and subsequent contacts with the fund were made at the suggestion of another foundation. The fund's interest was aroused before Miss Lanier was even aware of the existence of the Lindisfarne project. This is a matter of record.

5. I have never been in "training as a Zen contemplative."

Miss Helgesen has taken quotes out of context, thus betraying her own goal of "a regard not only for the facts, but for the relationship between those facts." She has, in this way, made me appear to say things I did not say when put in context. It is impossible not to conclude that Miss Helgesen set out to present her own negative feeling as facts to support predetermined conclusions. This kind of writing does a disservice as much to the honest critics of Lindisfarne as it does to its honest supporters.

GENE FAIRLY  
New York, N.Y.

### SALLY HELGESEN REPLIES:

I won't deal with Mr. Fairly's nebulous quibblings over my choice of phrase, but will respond to him on substantial issues point by point:

1. While the official prospectus for Lindisfarne (which I have read) does not, of course, claim that the institute would pave the way for the "new planetary culture," *Passages About Earth*, which Mr. Thompson was writing while Mr. Fairly was making the rounds of the foundations, heralds the project in exactly those apocalyptic terms.

2. Mr. Fairly told me that William Irwin Thompson wanted and needed his help with Lindisfarne because of Mr. Fairly's "business background and connections."

3. I stand corrected by Mr. Fairly on one aspect of point three: I was unaware that Nancy Wilson Ross and Mrs. Stanley Young were the same person. However, Mr. Fairly did tell me I could reach her "at the Asia Society." Since I had no reason to doubt his word, I did not check on her; however, she is not listed in *Who's Who*.

4. To remark that a descendant the "heir to a poet" doesn't necessarily imply that the poet in question gained a fortune writing poetry; I simply wanted to make the connection between the Laniers and their forebear. In addition, I never suggested that Jean Lanier was Fairly's initial contact with the Rockefeller Foundation but only that her sympathies helped his cause there, which he said they did.

5. Mr. Fairly spoke to me of his study of Zen and showed me the mat he used for his practice of meditation. I put the phrases together.

### First Amendment right

The seemingly inexhaustible brouhaha about pornography and the First Amendment is circular and self-feeding, but I think Lewis H. Lapham [in "Confusion Worse Confounded," April] strikes a first blow for merciful clarity and possible resolution by pointing out that what he saw in *Hustler*—which he also purchased after all the publicity—is hardly *speech*. And it is freedom of speech that the First Amendment protects, is it not?

Perhaps we could go one step further and ask, What is in a magazine like *Hustler* and how is it used? Again Mr. Lapham has said it: what is in *Hustler* is nihilism, barbarism, and the reduction of humans to manipulatable things with male and female plugs.

It wasn't until I read Mr. Lapham's piece that I first thought to ask the question that may give a new slant to this whole porn-First Amendment-porn cycle. For it is partially in how magazines like *Hustler* are used that their coercion lies. I maintain that they are forced on us, that they are pushed in to our unwilling faces when we are unprepared for and undesirous of their pictures and message.

I am a passionate music lover. If anyone wanted to ban a concert, I would rise up in wrath. But my wrath would be no greater than what I feel



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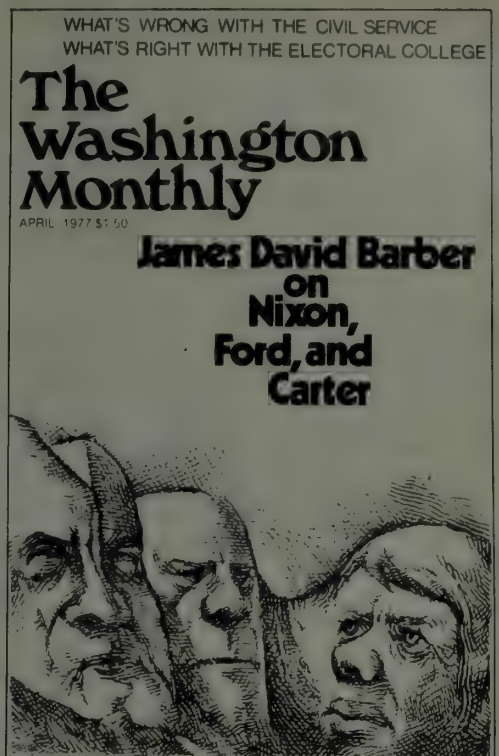
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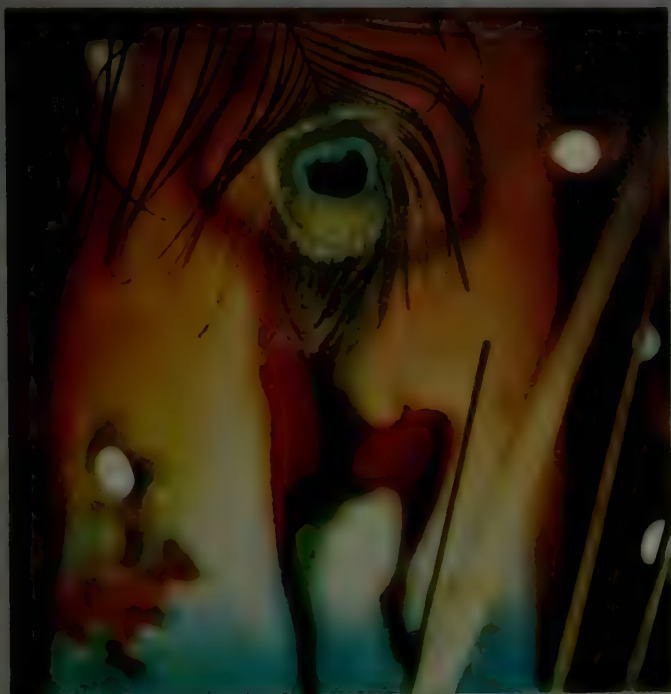
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Samaras



# VERSE

by Daniel Halpern

## TAKE FOR EXAMPLE

Take the insect for example.  
The pale wings that work in air  
and the singing legs.

It goes forth into the air  
unafraid. It can return  
to the place it set out from,

or it can continue flying, outward.  
If it does not turn back  
it is always singing

to some new part of the world  
as it passes—to the flower  
in its first opening,

to the leaf floating on a branch,  
to the bird upon the grass,  
to the window and the house,

to the man who slaps the song  
between his hands  
in the one applause he knows.

And the man goes back.  
He goes back to the place  
he set out from without a song.

## BLUE SUSPENSION

Brown wood and moss-covering,  
women, their wicker baskets

of dark bread and cold meats, wine  
and the girl who wore the denim dress,

whose eyes I never saw in the strange  
light of the afternoon. Take this

photograph from me, the lawn filled  
with mallets and colored balls, wickets

and the trimmed hedge. I remember this,  
the summer and the summer baskets, her dress

and the water when I found her, the strange  
light on wood below the surface of water,

the dress fluttering there, fluttering  
as if in a wind, as if I were seeing it

from the lawn, a dark wood scent still upon me,  
the dry feel of the wooden mallet in my hands,

the bright balls moving toward wickets, the black  
bread, the red wine, the girl in her blue suspension.

## LETTERS

two days ago on a crowded subway  
upon hearing a young man turn on  
full volume—his transistor radio. I  
of us on that train *had* to listen. The  
music happened to be a rock piece  
like; but in context and at my own  
choosing, please!

And so with *Hustler* and so many  
other magazines. All of them appear  
my son's candy store, where I buy  
*Times* on Sunday (across the street  
from church); they appear on bus  
boards at the commuter station,  
kiosks hawking papers in the city. We  
are assaulted all over Times Square  
when going to the theater by what  
feel is a kind of pollution, precisely  
in the same offensive way that the  
blaring transistor radio polluted the  
atmosphere in the subway.

We have laws that prevent people  
from smoking, spitting, pissing, and  
doing other unpleasant things in public  
places. It's a function of community  
standards, hygiene, and the covenant  
we all make with our fellow man  
to avoid incipient anarchy. We have  
somehow translated this into law, and  
it works reasonably well. Can't we do  
that with this junk too? Since there  
seems to be a demand for pornography,  
let there be a supply, but keep it  
the supply indoors with signs, if you  
will, that say "Pornography sold here  
—or whatever. Let the suppliers adver-  
tise, but with reasonable regard  
to community standards. If cigarette  
manufacturers can't push smoke ads  
in public places, why should pornogra-  
phers be permitted to assault us with  
four-color blowups of genitalia? Isn't  
this environmental pollution too?

SPENCER WELCH  
Bedford, N.Y.

Lewis H. Lapham's "Confusion  
Worse Confounded," in which he  
easily reconciles an allegiance to the  
First Amendment with his unwilling-  
ness to protest the censorship of Larry  
Flynt's *Hustler* magazine, contains  
specifically cruel and wrong thoughts  
that Flynt presents homosexuality, can-  
ibalism, sadism, narcissism, and homo-  
icide in *Hustler*'s "degradation of  
human beings." Lapham's ignorant  
conclusion of homosexuality in a mixed  
bag of travesties, crimes, hang-ups,  
and obscenities makes foolish his en-  
tire argument.

VANCE MURPHY  
Austin, Texas

HARPER'S/JUNE 1977





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# Ontario Canada



# THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN

ing the captives' need

by Lewis H. Lapham

EARLY APRIL of this year, Mr. Andrew Young, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, and Mr. Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, it necessary to revise some of previous improvisations on the Mr. Young declared inoperative of his interpretations of American policy, and Mr. Haley conceded *Roots* was not so much a work of as it was a study in "myth-." Their apologies and explanation took up considerable space in the papers. On Mr. Young's behalf the Department issued its usual statement of embarrassed denial, and Mr. went off to Africa to find solace television photographers on the River.

reading of their troubles with ce- it occurred to me that both Mr. g and Mr. Haley had somehow ac- l, in their eminent middle age, relessness of mind that I associate he children of the very rich. Their s reminded me of Brooke Hay- complaining about the sadness of champagne. In the process of ng out what I meant by this ob- ion I understood that Mr. Young Mr. Haley had inherited an im-

mense fortune. Instead of capital in the form of stock-market shares, they had received capital in the form of moral obligation. Given the suffering inflicted on the Negro slaves in the United States, and given also the injustice done to the generations of their descendants, how could the living heirs possibly calculate the vastness of the sum owing to them? Even the more reactionary administrators of social finance acknowledge the lien on the white man's time, money, and privilege, and so the balance of accumulated grief must seem so great as to have become infinite, an account against which the black can draw, like Mr. Rockefeller or Mr. Mellon, without ever having to ask what anything costs.

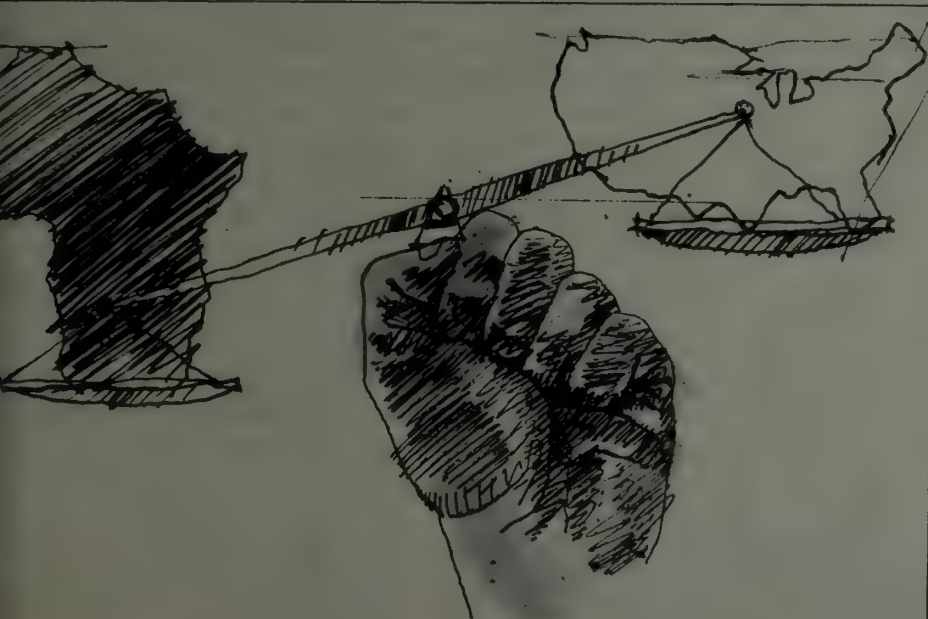
The credit represented by this holding of the blacks constitutes the bulk of what remains of a civic conscience, which is why the extravagance of Mr. Young and Mr. Haley prompts me to wonder about the chance of an eventual bankruptcy. Since taking office in January, Mr. Young has involved himself in a sequence of expensive controversies. Within a period of less than three months he managed to accuse the

*Lewis H. Lapham is the editor of Harper's.*

English of "inventing racism," to refer to the South African government as "illegitimate," to suggest that black American troops would refuse to obey their commanders in an African war, to dismiss as "paranoid" the concern about Communism in Africa, and to endorse the presence of Cuban troops in Angola as a force for "stability."

LEAVING ASIDE THE charming fatuousness of these remarks, the question arises as to Mr. Young's intent. I can appreciate his rage against the hypocrisy of diplomatic convention, and I am sure that he takes great pleasure in bringing down miseries on the head of Cyrus Vance, but the game of jiving Whitey is a little bit like playing polo. So few people can afford to play the game well, and even then it lacks an audience. Whitey has a way of taking things so seriously (foreign policy being the last earnest pastime available to the American ruling class), and if Whitey doesn't get the joke, then to whom is Mr. Young addressing himself?

If he means to encourage the people of Africa, he runs the risk of being mistaken for an uptown white liberal wandering around in the wrong part of town in the hope of passing himself off as a local dissident. Tom Wicker, the well-known newspaper columnist, tried to do more or less the same thing at Attica prison, assuring the inmates of his solidarity with their grievances and his participation in their human suffering. The prisoners failed to understand that Mr. Wicker was feeding the worm of his omnivorous guilt. Confusing metaphor with fact, they got themselves killed and so provided Mr. Wicker with the plot for another uneasy memoir. By suggesting that the United States will stand with the African nations for reasons of conscience, Mr. Young offers the people of those nations a comparable opportunity for martyrdom. He pre-





## THE EASY CHAIR

surely knows (having been present during the civil-rights movement of the 1960s) that the United States has yet to cast off all the shackles of racial prejudice. God help the credulous African politician who, believing in an American commitment to black power, would undertake a border raid under the banner of "freedom now."

If Mr. Young means to address himself to an American audience, he presents a travel agent's portrait of Africa. Judging from his impressions of that continent, he seems to think that there really isn't much difference between Atlanta and Kinshasa. He talks about the wonders of "majority rule" (which brought so much peace and happiness to so many American Negroes for so many years), and he forgets to mention that the tribes of Africa speak as many as 100 languages and that in a disturbingly large number of those languages the verb "to eat" has the further and metaphorical meaning of "win," "conquer," or "gain." Mr. Young suggests that Africans settle their own disputes, failing to point out that the settlements often require the large-scale massacre of what otherwise would constitute the Congressional minority. The warfare in Africa has been all but continuous for the past twenty years, the various ideologies theoretically at issue tending to be expressed in whatever slogans happen to be printed on the boxes of ammunition that arrive, as if by magic, from far away beyond the mountains. Nor does Mr. Young bring forward the unhappy news that people who would claim the prerogatives of civilization must also bear the burdens of civilization, which, unlike living Whitey, is neither easy nor fun. By advocating a policy of Africa for the Africans, Mr. Young exposes several generations of people, both black and white, to the risk of slaughter. From the historical perspective this no doubt can be explained as an unfortunate but necessary state in the progress toward the amiable cynicism of empire. A similar explanation supported the institution of slavery.

**I**N MUCH THE SAME WAY that Mr. Young passes lightly over the modern reality of Africa, Mr. Haley makes a romance of African history. He sustains the illusion of a lost Eden to which, in the fifteenth century,

Satan came in the guise of a white man. This is like saying that the United States was an innocent and happy land before the election of Richard Nixon.

During the early years of African independence, I remember listening to variations on the same music in the United Nations. As a newspaper correspondent assigned to the General Assembly, I was obliged to write down whatever I was told. The newly arrived delegates spoke about the evils of colonialism (evils that I also could name and condemn), but then they went on to conjure forth the phantom civilizations of Prester John and the Queen of Sheba. Their eloquence forced me to go to libraries in search of proofs that the foreign editor would accept as convincing. Although I could find little evidence for civilizations of any kind, I could read extensively about the slave trade, cannibalism, tribal wars, wood-carving, raffia weaving, and the steady state of Stone Age cultures that had survived for possibly as long as 250,000 years. The slave trade prospered under the Roman Empire, and it was restored by the Arabs in the eleventh century. Its success depended on the eagerness of the African tribes to sell their enemies, their wives, their friends, and their children at whatever price was offered. Prior to the arrival of the English and the Dutch in the seventeenth century, the trade flourished with the Muslim kingdoms to the northeast and with the African kingdoms of Uganda, Dahomey, and Benin. When the trade was extended into the Atlantic markets, the importers seldom ventured into the African interior. The local entrepreneurs marched their goods to the coast, nine of every ten slaves dying before they reached the ships as opposed to the five of every ten who died on the middle passage. The Western European nations sickened of slavery in a far briefer period of time than did the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, or the Africans, and in 1812 the British and American governments closed off the trade by stationing gunboats in the Bight of Benin. It is thus conceivable that another of Mr. Haley's ancestors might have objected to the loss of his market as a result of what he might have described, had he been a delegate to the United Nations, as the well-known economic discrimination against the raw materials of the Third World.

**I** RAISE THESE POINTS not because I wish to embarrass Mr. Haley or Mr. Young but because I worry about the collapse of their creeds. The children of the rich sometimes give way to ruinous fantasies. Like builders of colonial empires, they expect to believe that they can do nothing wrong.

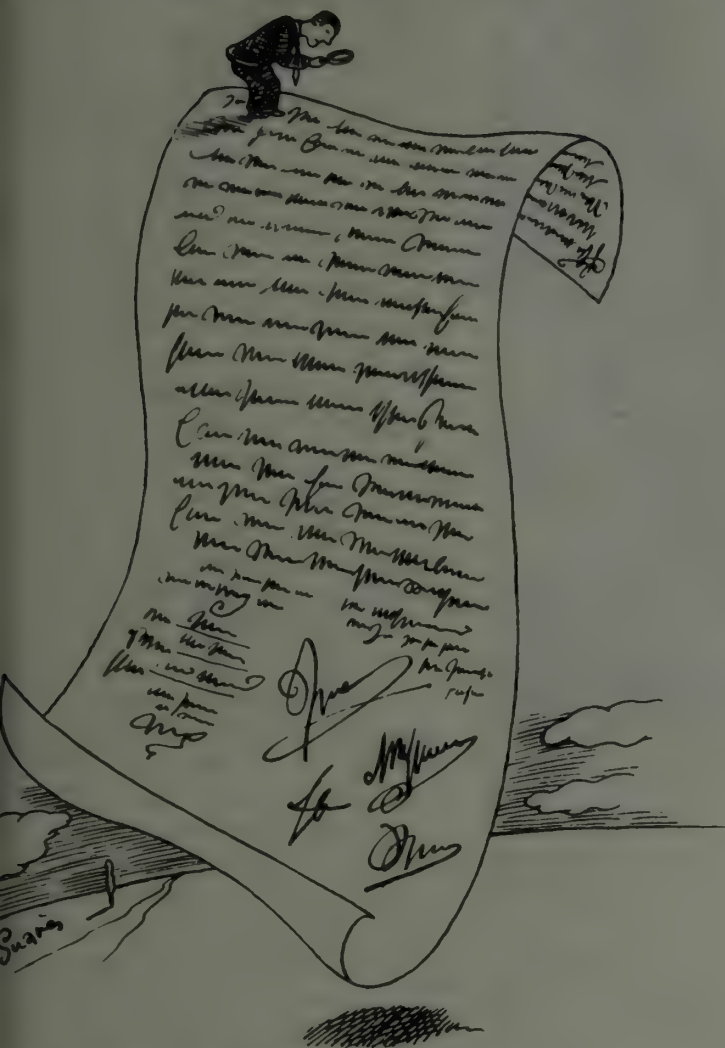
It is true that the blacks arrived in the United States as slaves, not as migrants. It is also true that slavery is the most detestable of human conditions, that it is criminal, hateful, foul. But a great many white men have understood as much. Not only understood the evil of slavery but also, in the American Civil War, began to hate it.

The most affecting passages in Haley's book tell the story of the way out of slavery against apparently hopeless odds. I do not think it too trite to say that they probably have done so only in the United States—not because Americans possess extraordinary virtue but because they have a respect for the truth. During the fusion of the academic controversy about *Roots*, Mr. Haley said he was so much interested in truth as he was interested in myths and symbols. Myths and symbols, as Mr. Haley surely must know from his study of African history, work to the advantage of ignorance, superstition, and greed. What would he say to the myth of Confederate South? To all the skin prejudices dressed up in the trappings of church and state? Against what does he think his ancestors were fighting, and for what, and with what weapons in their hands?

The human contract presumes an agreement among all concerned to honor their debts, and the democratic prospers to the extent that people honor each other to their mutual obligation. But what happens if the white man owes the black man everything, as the black man owes the white man nothing? This is an impolitic question. I have no answer to it. But I do think that as the contract becomes corrupt as the white man becomes patron and the black man client, the chance of liberty or equality dwindles into a garb's hope. The white man who demands an accounting does as much dishonor to himself as to the black man's work or truth. If Mr. Young



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## THE EASY CHAIR

be encouraged to say whatever it comes into his head to say, then it no longer matters what Mr. Young says. His remarks already have been discounted; the song and dance of the hired minstrel. The cowardice that informs the policy of racial quotas also exaggerates the praise bestowed on Mr. Haley by eminent historians who, moved to their wonder and ideological convenience, discovered that its "historical essence" transcended the bounds of mere fact. Robert F. Fogel, professor of history at Harvard University, gave voice to the condescension subsequently amplified by the award of a Pulitzer Prize.

"*Roots*," said Professor Fogel, "was a good novel by a man who had done more research than most authors who write historical novels. . . . I never applied to it the standards that I would have if it had been written by C. Vann Woodward or Oscar Handlin."

But Mr. Haley had presented the book as nonfiction, and so the professor's praise brings with it an air of faint contempt. The academic congratulation reminded me of the young man who was named class valedictorian upon graduating last year from a high school in Washington, D.C. He was black, and so the faculty thought it especially redeeming to give him the emblems of an education. When he failed to pass his college entrance examinations, he discovered that he was a ignorant, that his education was no education, that he had been defrauded by people who prided themselves on being his friends.

With the white man, or at least with some of them, this is an old story. They assume that their debt is deductible; something they can write off as a charitable contribution against the taxes on their conscience. I can understand Mr. Haley and Mr. Young wanting to run the same swindle. All that easy money and all those uptown lies must present temptations difficult to resist. But it is true that the inheritance of the American blacks represents much of the country's moral wealth, then possibly Mr. Haley and Mr. Young also have inherited (maybe much to their regret) the obligation to tell what they know of the truth. Otherwise they can do nothing but squander the fortune that it cost their forefathers so much

ERIN.

HARPER'S/JUNE 1981



# CALIFORNIA STILL DREAMING

new Western politics is the old selfish privatism

by Arthur I. Blaustein

SINCE POLITICAL observers were fond of saying, "As Maine goes, so goes the nation." Shortly thereafter, the more among them revised the adage "Maine goes, so goes Vermont." Recently, however, the political—such as Walter, John, and Harry—"California is the one to watch, the big casino"; at the same time, cultural gurus have proclaimed it a proving ground for paradise. George Will, the usually cautious conservative, recently declared, "The East is a landfall for immigrants of all sorts, was the laboratory of American politics. Today California, land's end for migrants of all sorts, is the laboratory."

In place of the "less is more" philosophy, California has become both the cultural fad-fashioner of the nation and the dominant political force in the West. What does this imply for the nation politically? Many have referred to California trendiness as a hope for America's greening. But, at risk of rankling the good vibes of the new Californians, I would suggest that California's politics—like every-

thing else about the state—seems to reflect immaturity, dislocation, selfishness, and general feeble-mindedness, an absence of commitment to *any* serious ideology or issue (with the exception of the drought). So, side by side, the New Left and Old Right spin their fantasies, while the elected political leadership of the state provides barbed wire patter for the sunstruck majority who brightly urge the departing visitor to "have a nice day."

## Small is beautiful

A FEW MONTHS AGO, we were treated to an unusual display of a bipartisan political alliance, California style. Jerry Brown, the thirty-nine-year-old former Jesuit seminarian turned Democratic governor, held a widely publicized vegetarian luncheon for the seventy-year-old former professor of semantics turned Republican Senator, S.I.

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Hayakawa. At the press conference following their feast, Hayakawa announced, "I think perhaps you see before you two of the very few political figures who are struggling with Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*." Brown responded by reminding the assemblage of reporters that Wittgenstein concluded his book by determining that "silence is probably the only legitimate course of action."

At another point in this exchange Brown stated that "the first book I read when I left the novitiate was *Language and Truth in Action*. . . . I found the discussion on the ladder of abstraction very interesting." (The actual title of Hayakawa's popular textbook is *Language in Thought and Action*, but to a devotee of Siddhartha—as Brown is—the distinction between thought and truth is a mere trifle.)

Later on Brown noted that "Hayakawa has *Small Is Beautiful* [by E. F. Schumacher] on order. I've read his book, and now he's starting to read a few of mine." The governor is given to using the princely "mine" much as Charles de Gaulle used the royal "we."

Missing from the governor's and





Senator's discussion was any reference to the 7.8 million people out of work, the decay of our cities, the energy crisis, the stagnant economy, or the failure of our health-care system. It was a little as if Gov. Hugh Carey and Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan had had lunch at the statehouse in Albany and jointly announced that they agreed with Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

In many ways the health care, housing, and unemployment problems are as bad in California as they are in New York. Yet Californians nod their heads in passive approval of this sort of groovy performance. Such is the condition of the art of politics when the citizenry is more concerned with style, sex, surfing, swinging, smoking, sniffing, sunsets, and skateboards. One is reminded of the comment by a Democratic politician from the Bronx who, upon hearing Brown speak before the California delegation at the Democratic National Convention last summer, remarked, "Hell, if that guy wasn't governor, he'd be arrested for loitering."

**A**LTHOUGH CONVENTIONAL wisdom usually focuses on the North-South or urban-rural split in national politics, a much more significant one is the split between East and West, one that has been growing more acute in the past decade. Indeed, the distribution of electoral votes on the morning after the Presidential election resembled the lineup for the East-West Shriners game. This division raises two interesting questions: (a) what was on the minds of voters in the West when they went to the polls last November 2? and (b) if Jimmy Carter is to make good on his pledge to reunite the country, what issues will he need to address himself to in order to bridge this gap?

In search of answers to these questions, I found myself confronted by the problem of how to discover the political concerns of Californians. In Boston one interviews bartenders in eleven saloons from Dorchester to North End; in New York, one subjects oneself to fourteen consecutive taxi drivers; and in Chicago one merely telephones five ward bosses. And almost anywhere one can preface one's own opinions by the phrase "Several astute political observers said. . . ." But

these methods do not work in California, where all bartenders look and sound like Jack Ford, and cabdrivers are more prone to tell you about their macramé patterns or vegetarian diets than their politics. As for ward leaders, there aren't two in the whole state worth their weight in votes, and everyone knows that there is simply no such animal as "the astute political observer" in California. But there is one reliable source of political information, a product of California's automobile culture: the bumper sticker.

Though Californians may disagree about many things, the consensus is that Berkeley is the most politically active town in the state, if not the nation. Nor are Berkeleyites shy about which political cause or candidate they support. A Volkswagen bus is usually good for three stickers, a Ford Courier pickup truck can handle four, and a Volvo 44 or a Fiat 128 take two each, on the average. And any political scientist in California will tell you that the hottest location in town is the parking lot at the Northside Co-op Market. So last year, on the day before the Presidential election, I set out to do two surveys: at noontime, to catch the unemployed, and at 5:30 the same day, to get the rush-hour homecoming traffic.

There are 139 parking spaces in the lot. In order to get a well-rounded sample of 300, I included the seven metered spaces out front on Shattuck Avenue and the first four illegally parked cars at the entrance ramp. There were no allowances for standard deviation, as the weather was good, and the day was neither a religious nor ethnic holiday.

The results of the poll were as follows:

'YES ON 14*	19
SAVE THE WHALES:	4
BOYCOTT JAPANESE GOODS	
HONK IF YOU LOVE	3
MARY HARTMAN,	
MARY HARTMAN	
SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL	2
FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND	2
EARTHQUAKES ARE HERE	2
WATERBEDS ARE BEDDER	1

That's it. There was not one single

\* Proposition Fourteen, a referendum on granting farm workers the right to vote for a union to represent them. It was overwhelmingly rejected.

bumper that in any way let on that we were twenty-four hours away from Presidential election. And this was the hottest lot, in the most politically active community in "the big casino."

## Some political items

**I**N THE COURSE OF his Senatorial campaign, S. I. Hayakawa, campaigning as an anti-Washington, antigovernment conservative, stated that Japanese-Americans benefited from having been interned during World War II and that child labor laws should be repealed. The tam-shanter-clad, tap-dancing Hayakawa also suggested that the way to encourage insurrection in Communist-dominated countries was to send American jazz records into Eastern Europe.

□ The largest-selling newspaper in Northern California, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, devoted a full page to interviews with prominent citizens the day after the election. The celebrities explained "Why I voted for Jerry Ford."

Sally Stanford, former madam and mayor of Sausalito:

*I think Ford's done a good job for the country. But I liked Nixon, too. They always blame everything on the President. My God, these things have been going on for years. All these religious people, they do things I wouldn't think of doing. Unions are ruining the country too. Prices are soaring, building costs have gone way up with all these environmental nuts running around. There are too many controls.*

Gene Washington, wide receiver of the San Francisco Forty-niners:

*The biggest reason was because of Ford's fiscal policies. I think it's the most important issue at this point. Being a person who pays a lot of taxes, I'm naturally concerned about that area, but more importantly, our economy really needs to be put in good order in light of the world situation. I just think a more conservative fiscal policy is needed.*

And Carol Doda, topless entertainer:

*We should have been able to vote for both of them and have two presidents. What one doesn't have the other does, and vice versa. Mr.*



*Ford has experience, and I think he's trying to hold the country together economically. But I think Carter is basically for the working person and that's good too. But in the end I was leaning on Ford, and that's why I voted for him.*

In last year's election, California, for the first time, allowed voting by institutionalized persons who are considered mentally deficient. More than 100 of them took advantage of this right.

At Clausen House in Oakland, a residential school and counseling center for the mentally retarded or those who have nervous disorders, residents were interviewed as to how they voted.

Rhonda Kronberg said that she preferred Jimmy Carter because "Carter has a nice personality, I think, and I believe he is more articulate than Ford in a lot of ways." She added, "The Republicans messed up with Nixon," and thought that Carter "seemed committed to follow through with most of his policies."

Judy Schwartz, another resident, said she was for Carter because "he would cut down on welfare and offer people jobs." She continued, "I do not support Ford because he let Nixon off so easy."

The reporter did not draw attention to the superiority of the reasons given by the certified over those given by the celebrities.

Judge Leon Frand was elected to the municipal court in Los Angeles. Judge Frand had died in early September, but his constituents voted for him because the Los Angeles County Bar Association ruled that his opponent was unqualified.

In Orange County, that bastion of the far Right, a stunning upset occurred. The most conservative assembly district in the country sent a Democrat to the State Assembly in Sacramento. The district runs along the Orange and San Diego County coast from Newport Beach to Oceanside, and has always been a shoo-in for Republicans. It has the highest percentage of retired doctors and military officers in the nation, and is the present home of Richard Nixon. The Republican candidate, a Newport car dealer named Jim Slemons, was a strong Reagan supporter. Slemons's campaign faltered when it was revealed that he had been accused by U.S. Customs of attempt-

ing to import pornographic material into the country, and that his wife had been a nude model for *Penthouse*. All things considered, the Orange County Republicans decided to fly to evils they knew not of.

□ Referendums calling for safeguards on building nuclear power plants, which were bitterly contested in five statewide elections in the West, were all soundly defeated. The antireferendum campaigns, which were supported with money and advertising by the big utility companies, succeeded in Oregon, Colorado, Washington, Montana, and Arizona.

□ California went for Jerry Ford by almost 130,000 votes, leading the way for his victory in every state in the West except Hawaii.

NINETEEN SEVENTY-SIX was supposed to be the year of the unpolitical politicians and people's candidates, champions of the ordinary voter against the power-hungry bureaucrats, the parties, and the political pros. It was also hailed as a non-issue campaign. Yet in the East, South, and Midwest, voters—bored though they were—still perceived issues and voted along party lines. Only out West did voters amble to the polls on November 2 in underwhelming numbers.

Obviously the way to get elected in the West is to mumble Jerry Brown's antigovernment mantra. Those politicians who succeeded there, such as Ford and Hayakawa, did so by outdoing their opponents with rhetoric that assailed high budgets and taxes, attacked social and economic programs, and made public servants sound like agents for hostile foreign governments. Like most Westerners, Californians are foursquare for clean air, open space, equality, and decent housing, and against smog, dirty streams, inflation, and oil spills on Santa Barbara beaches. But beyond that the commitment fades. Behind the facade of cultural hype, the new Western politics is, in essence, the old selfish privatism.

Instead of efforts to redress social, economic, and political inequalities, the voters are offered only vague upward psychic mobility wrapped in the mantle of rugged individualism or deep asceticism. The "new activism" is one that

is actively committed to passivity, a state of mind which refuses to undertake the slightest personal inconvenience to intercede on behalf of those in our society who are suffering most. The character of California's politics can best be defined as a well-balanced combination of "the theory of the leisure class" (Brown) and "the leisure of the theory class" (Hayakawa).

Forgotten, amidst the plenty of material comforts, is the unpopular history of California's prosperity. Of the four major industries that made California what it is today, the railroads were built by cheap labor performed by illegal Chinese immigrants, the powerful agribusiness industry was built by the sweat of *braceros* from Mexico; the shipping industry and ports were built by blacks uprooted from Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama; and the defense industry's bloated contracts and cost overruns were paid for by the tax dollars of the inner-city residents of New York, Cleveland, Newark, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Forgotten, too, is any sense of social responsibility, a sense that has developed in other sections of the country.

California is suffering from a huge cultural and political identity crisis. The traditional modes of comprehending, interpreting, and articulating social and economic issues and problems and of resolving these conflicts by reasonable political means have been obscured. Instead we find scores of new fringe religions and psychological growth movements proclaiming a new nirvana of self-realization. Politics, like the culture, has become a form of public entertainment, no different in effect from *est*, the Moonies, Rod McKuen, or Masters and Johnson.

The laboratory for the "good life," California is the logical result of a society weaned on the instant gratification of thirty-, sixty-, and ninety-second TV commercials. The result of the experiment is terminal consumerism at its worst. It is not such a mysterious paradox of Campaign '76 that, while other parts of the nation proved willing to perceive differences and take some risks with Jimmy Carter, the rugged individualists of California and the West chose to stick with the stunted fantasies of Hollywood, Disneyland, Esalen, the Marlboro man, and the Republican party. ■■■■

HARPER'S/JUNE 1977



# THE NEED FOR ELITE EDUCATION

Declining standards cheat students and society alike .

by John R. Silber

**T**HE ONLY STANDARD of performance that can sustain a free society is excellence. It is increasingly claimed, however, that excellence is at odds with democracy; increasingly we are urged to offer a dangerous embrace to mere adequacy.

By this I do not mean that our performance is necessarily becoming worse. In the sports in which precise comparison is possible we excel our predecessors with a consistency and regularity that threaten to become monotonous. Athletes have never run so fast, jumped so high, or sunk so many baskets. Even as we recognize what appears to be our prevailing inability to teach most children to read and write, we reassure ourselves that educational opportunity has never been greater and that science and mathematics have never been taught more effectively. Consumer goods have been developed to such a degree of sophistication, low cost, and reliability that one can now buy for a few dollars a tiny device whose capabilities were unavailable forty years ago in any size and at any price: the pocket calculator.

Our flight from excellence is different and apart from this progress. It is profoundly philosophical. Out of a well-intentioned but inept concern with equality of opportunity, we have begun to reject anything that exceeds anyone's grasp. Some might argue that it is our right to engage in this curious flight, and so it is, the right of free men to be fools. But do we have the right as citizens in a free society to

reject excellence on behalf of others who may not be so foolish?

Much of the present-day rejection of standards is precisely by people and institutions that act in trust for others. This is flagrantly true of higher education, and especially regrettable because higher education purports to be and has been a repository for the highest standards.

One of the most obvious examples here is the war against grading. While there are many motives and rationales behind the movement to substitute pass/fail or pass/no-entry "grading" for the traditional scales, all begin with the same crucial assumption: that there is no compelling reason to distinguish between excellence and adequacy, and that it is wrong—either educationally or morally—to record evidence of inadequacy or failure. A related phenomenon is grade inflation, whereby teachers behave as if all students are equally gifted and hard-working. Declining standards are also reflected in the relaxed indifference shown by many professors and institutions to the wholesale and retail distribution of plagiarized materials by corporations selling term papers and other academic assignments. In all cases the threat to excellence is obvious, for our refusal to reject inauthentic work or to identify excellence will eventually render us unable to recognize it or care about it.

Last year the City University of New York abandoned open enrollment. It did not, however, return to its earlier admissions standards, but instead established as the minimum qualification for admission the competence expected of an eighth-grade education. This is less an indictment of

the standards of CUNY, which was after all, seeking rather tentatively to step back from the abyss, than it is of the high schools. For while prospective students at CUNY must now have reached an eighth-grade level, they must also be high-school graduates—so, in theory, they must also have attained a twelfth-grade education. Implicit in the admissions standards of CUNY is a one-third devaluation of the New York high-school diploma.

It is to the credit of the City University that it has introduced very extensive remedial programs to upgrade the competence of incoming freshmen. But should this extensive remedial work, requiring at least one full year to complete, be carried on in the context of a great university? It is hardly higher education, since it is no higher than the work expected of high-school students. Surely this work could be done more economically and appropriately by the high schools or community colleges.

Every day it becomes more obvious that a technologically sophisticated society will need more, not fewer, educated citizens. Postindustrial society will be grim for a functional illiterate and it will itself be badly disrupted by the presence of large numbers of semiliterates whose skills, if any, are suited to a world that no longer exists. A restoration of excellence is therefore in the interest of society at large and of each of its members.

**S**OME PEOPLE believe that the pursuit of excellence is essentially antidemocratic. This fallacy is most obvious in the commonly voiced charge that educa-

*John R. Silber is the president of Boston University.*



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nal institutions with high standards  
excellence in admissions and faculty  
ruitment are "elitist," a term that  
most people is redolent of special  
l unearned privilege and suggests  
t these institutions are havens for  
incompetent offspring of the rich.  
Our society is ambivalent about  
ism. We refer easily and unself-  
sciously to Ruth, Gehrig, and Mays  
the elite of baseball, to Simpson and  
ugh as the elite of football, to Jones,  
lmer, and Trevino as the elite of  
I, and to Zaharias, Thorpe, and  
ens as the elite of athletics itself;  
t outside of sports we use the word  
a reproach. This confusion did not  
ict Jefferson or Adams. "That all  
n are born to equal rights is true,"  
d Adams.

*Every being has a right to his own,  
as clear, as moral, as sacred, as  
any other being has.... But to  
teach that all men are born with  
equal powers and faculties... is as  
gross a fraud, as glaring an im-  
position on the credulity of people as  
ever was practiced.*

Jefferson recognized a natural aris-  
tocracy based on virtue and talents.  
contrasted to this aristocracy an  
ificial one, founded on wealth and  
th without regard to virtue or tal-  
t. The natural aristocracy, Jefferson  
ieved, was "the most precious gift  
nature." He not only acknowledged,  
t embraced, the idea that people  
e born with varying degrees of in-  
elligence and talent.

Speaking on the occasion of receiv-  
g an Alumnae Award recently at  
ston University, Rep. Barbara Jor-  
n pointed out that our confusion has  
d deleterious effects on the federal  
vernment's effort to aid higher edu-  
ion. She said:

*We have been so brainwashed by  
an erroneous definition of democ-  
racy that we have difficulty pre-  
scribing any program or formula,  
or giving any grant which is better  
or more than some other grant,  
because we don't want to be ac-  
cused of being antidemocratic be-  
cause we recognize that some peo-  
ple are excellent.... As members  
of Congress, we should not be en-  
gaged in a leveling process.... We  
ought to enunciate and promote  
those policies which would lead  
absolutely, categorically, and with-*



out hesitation, to the best this country has to offer.

Calls for the maintenance of standards are often denounced as racist and sexist, but only a sexist or racist could believe that women or members of minorities are in fact inferior to everyone else, and would be unable to compete on an equal basis if judged by performance alone. If our society really did hold and maintain high standards, we would expect up to 51 percent of all partners in Wall Street law firms to be women and 11 percent of all surgeons to be blacks. The extent to which we fall short of these figures shows how far we are from honoring excellence as a criterion. Rejecting excellence in the interest of women and minorities is in effect a condescending adoption of a lower standard for them.

THE MOVEMENT to establish the United States as a bilingual nation provides a striking example of this condescension. Until recently, the United States was unique in the world as a very large nation covering a great land mass that maintained a single national language with dialects that were easily mutually intelligible. It is remarkable that a nation of such ethnic diversity has not been torn apart by intercommunal violence. Our comparative peace and the single language are almost certainly related: unlike Canada, Belgium, and other nations with explosive linguistic problems, the United States has been able to sustain its diverse culture within the context of one official language. Recent attempts to require bilingual ballots erode the position of the national language by assuming that it is possible to be a citizen even if one is literate only in the language of one's ethnic group.

The proposal is designed to exempt one large group of citizens from a requirement that has hitherto been expected of all citizens, the acquisition of some modest competence in the national language. This reduces the standard of performance expected of citizens to a derisory level. It patronizes the Hispanic culture by implying that it cannot survive coexistence with the English language. And it has racist overtones, suggesting that Spanish-speaking American citizens cannot be

expected to acquire the same level of competence that was acquired by immigrants from Germany, Italy, Russia, Poland, Greece, and many other countries, and that was until recently expected of Spanish-speaking citizens. (Such an ill-advised notion should not be confused with the thoughtfully established programs of bilingual education which have been designed to induct children into the use of the national language. This process is a burden that obviously ought to be assumed by our society as a logical consequence of having a national language in the first place, and as essential to the provision of equal educational opportunity.)

A similar question arises with regard to the various dialects of English. In 1974 the National Council of Teachers of English issued a position paper maintaining that students who grow up speaking dialectal variants of English should not be required to learn standard English. On a recent television program an obviously intelligent and educated young black student said it was plain that students who grew up speaking dialects arrived in school ill prepared to function in the standard dialect. He did not think that attempts to require these students to use the standard dialect grew out of "overt racism or elitism. . . . That's the way it's mapped out by society." Recognizing that the good intentions of such attempts precluded their being overtly racist, he nevertheless left the impression that he considered them part of unconscious societal racism.

Nothing could be farther from racism or elitism than requiring students from the ghetto to learn standard English. For this is to treat them as the equals of the great majority of students.

It is particularly reprehensible for white professors and white middle-class students to encourage black students in the mistaken belief that it does not matter whether they learn to speak and write with educated middle-class proficiency. The black student who speaks only ghetto English is not able to communicate fully. He can communicate effectively only with those who speak his own dialect, but an educated black can converse with anyone in the English-speaking world. White professors and students, already proficient in standard English, retain their monopoly in it and protect themselves from black competition by en-

couraging blacks to renounce their educational opportunities. Thus black may remain tragically isolated from the mainstream of their national culture, and pay the price for the ideological whims of whites.

LOWERED EXPECTATIONS are a threat to all our students since their ability to develop is very largely dependent upon the goals we establish for them. But it is not students alone who need a vision of excellence. Writing in 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville noted that times of faith, people concern themselves with a distant supreme goal beyond this life. In so doing,

*they learn by imperceptible degrees to repress a crowd of petty passing desires in order ultimately to best satisfy the one great permanent longing which obsesses them. When these same men engage in worldly affairs, such habits influence their conduct. . . . That is why religious nations have often accomplished such lasting achievements. For in thinking of the other world, they have found out the great secret of success in this.*

But in skeptical ages, Tocqueville continued, the vision of the life to come is lost, a problem that is exacerbated in democracies, where people are set free to compete with each other to improve their situations. In such a combination of circumstances "the present looms large and hides the future, so that men do not want to think beyond tomorrow." Tocqueville thought it especially important that the philosophers and rulers in skeptical democracies should always "strive to set a distant aim as the object of human efforts; that is their most important business." He did not specify the nature of the goals which need to be set in such ages, but we can hardly doubt that such goals require the best efforts not merely of individuals but of the society as a whole. In a secular age in which few believe in a life to come and in which God is, if not dead at most indifferent, a vision of excellence—a secular kingdom of God—which individuals fulfill themselves through education and useful public service may be essential.





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# STUDENTS OF THE SUBJECTIVE

Adult education joins the leisure industry

by Sally Helgesen

**W**E WERE halfway through the semester in the human-sexuality course taught by Dr. Leslie Linet at the New School for Social Research in New York. The guest speaker on sado-masochism had cancelled, but the camera and monitor had already been set up; something visual was needed. So Dr. Linet was directing his students to tear hundreds of sheets of colored paper into little squares, which he said they must pretend were money. After the usual foul-ups attendant upon such cut-and-paste operations, which the reader may recall from kindergarten, the fake money was distributed, and the students were asked to line up in the order of their wealth. The camera started rolling.

"I read about this game in *Psychology Today*," came a cry from the front of the line; it was Meta, a Gestalt therapist whose last evening class at the New School had been in psycho-karate. "I can't say it's very imaginative."

Imaginative or not, it was certainly confusing, for the object of the game, a series of "free-trade encounters," was left entirely unexplained; the professor refused to answer any questions about procedure, and instead directed his attention to the young man with the Sony: "Pan to that transaction!

Get that exchange!" With the session left to follow an uncharted course, the native genius of anarchy inevitably took charge and, dullness being the daughter of chaos, a spirit of irritability asserted itself. Restlessness gave way to heckling and complaints, and the intended point of the exercise gleamed dully through mists of confusion only at the close of the session. As the class members watched the video playbacks, they were asked to translate their "trading behavior" into sexual terms, because money and sex are related.

Yes, of course money and sex are related; but why should the professor inflict such tedium when this information might be simply set forth and discussed? "I'm not here just to give information," explained Dr. Linet. "A course like this is a diluted, innocent, safe, passive kind of halfway therapy. Students who sign up may have sex problems that education can't deal with, but at least sitting in a class like this helps bring out their own shriveled feelings."

By choosing to teach with the psychological problems of his class in mind, Linet had thrown himself into that swampy territory where education and therapy take tangled root

*Sally Helgesen contributes to several national magazines.*

and knot together. Here, where intellectual discussion won't do because it's not strictly therapeutic, and eight weekly sessions hardly allow for examination of individual case histories, here the new method, with all its gamut of tricks, simulated enactments, videotaped exchanges, and dramatized reversals such as one might read about in *Psychology Today*, is employed, allowing the professor to maintain the illusion that the class, however tedious, is at least an *experience*, a therapeutic model from which students may draw instruction for daily use. In a class like Professor Linet's, where the subject matter does exist, this model method is a clumsy obstacle hurled into the middle of things, irritating perhaps, like the videotaped "trade counters," or bewildering, like the earlier session in which groups were asked to compose collective "turn-stories," but almost always senseless because the obstacle chokes off an exchange of information which threatens to take place.

**T**HERE ARE, however, other classes in adult education which might in a stricter sense be termed *classes in learning how to live*, in which the employment of the new method is essential;





in these any residue of content has evaporated entirely, leaving only a dry deposit which is hard to lay hold of but whose formless ductility renders it an ideal medium for the complex operations of the cut-and paste method. I am speaking now of those classes whose catalogue descriptions typically include such categories of concern as "Who am I?" "How can I achieve maximal self-actualization?" "How best to utilize my creative energies?" I am speaking of classes in which the "sharing" of common experience and the playing of games which are themselves regarded as experiences, provide the only possible structure because there is really nothing to be learned. Of course, the current national obsession with self-growth, self-awareness, self-development, self—well, self, self, self, self, . . . the gelatinous void of selfness, the "dark wet hole" as Rudolph Wuermer calls it—has been well noted; it has been remarked that the role that universities have begun to assume in this, especially as they expand their programs of adult education in response to the dwindling number of undergraduates; for, rather than lose enrollment, the schools are building up programs which will make them attractive to adults with time on their hands. They are becoming part of the leisure industry. And so it is that in adult education we find a dramatic proportion of classes wherein the line between self-improvement and therapy blurs, for it is these programs which must compete with other leisure activities for the extra dollars people are spending on the search for themselves. Surveying some recent catalogues, and noting the promises that such courses make and the mechanistic jargon which prevails, one is prompted to wonder if universities are not coming to regard themselves as giant body shops for those gripped by the desire to change options, shift gears, get into the driver's seat, or just zoom in for a general lube job before an imagined Grand Prix lying ahead of them on life's highway. A couple living in New York, for example, could study their own "Couple Communication" at Marymount College, or sit in on "Pitfalls and Possibilities: A Couples Workshop" at Hofstra University on Long Island. A man could elect to work on his own "Masculinity" at the same school, while a woman could

attend Womanschool in White Plains to consider "New Options in Marriage," or perhaps pursue a course in planning her daily schedule. New York University's School for Continuing Education teaches "Body Awareness" and "Personal Growth," while the entire city, from Columbia to Brooklyn College and the suburbs beyond seems to be throbbing with people subjecting their own sexuality to academic scrutiny.

**B**UT IT IS THE New School for Social Research, perhaps because it prides itself on a primary commitment to "meeting the intellectual and cultural needs of mature citizens," that leads the pack, for here one can find many courses on such themes as "Being a Separate Person," "The Struggle to Be Me," "The Liberated Parent," "Self-understanding II," "Talking with People," "Option Exchanges," or "Creative Problem-Solving." Since the New School opened in 1919, its policy has been to revise its curriculum each semester in an effort to keep abreast of the administration's perception of just what the "needs" of adults are. This practice kept the school in the intellectual vanguard: in the Twenties, it offered the first college courses on race and on psychoanalysis, taught by W.E.B. DuBois and Sandor Ferenczi, respectively; in the Thirties, Martha Graham taught the first courses on modern dance there; in the Forties, Charles Abrams introduced the problems of housing and urban planning to university study. In the Seventies, however, the ghosts of such distinguished innovators loom like heroic but disregarded shades, for what has come to be considered educational vanguardism in the past decade is the kind of class I have been talking about, the class which promises to help one make practical decisions and changes in one's life, the class in which one studies one's own problems. Should one get married? With whom should one have sexual relations, and what kind of relations should those be? What job would be best, and what hobby? What apartment? What pet? What fantasies? How might one make friends? How can one feel really good about oneself? These are all, of course, legitimate questions, questions which must be asked; what I

wonder is how well they can be answered in the classroom, and how fruitful it is to undertake a direct search for answers, rather than to master skills and acquire knowledge and in the process achieve a measure of self-understanding.

Observing classes in which the self is the sole object of concern offers a fertile field for one who derives a measure of comfort from the cultivation of clichés, whose consolation for triviality and emptiness is the eager taking of spade in hand to probe the loam for incongruities. The natural vacuum created by the lack of anything concrete to discuss will almost always be filled by platitudes of the most obvious sort, the platitude being not only a more plentiful plant than the original insight, but also a hardier species, a weed really, which flourishes and thrives in the deoxygenized air of the vacuum. And yet certainly something more than the desire to sport with absurdity inspired me to spend long hours sitting through classes in learning how to live, for the classes were often so mind-numbingly boring that even the dedicated connoisseur of banality would probably have hurled himself out the window rather than endure such tedium. That something more was my suspicion that the cult of experience, begot by sturdy utilitarianism upon the sweetly nurturing therapy, had grown into a rude and unmanageable monster.

This monster, as I say, is the spawn of utilitarianism, that spirit which has animated the American education since its Puritan beginnings, when men and women were taught to read so they might study the word of God. The ideal of the nineteenth century was the "self-made man," the tough individualist who used the rudiments of learning to forge an iron character and shrewd intelligence which would enable him to achieve success in the competitive world of expansionist mercantilism; the robber baron was a figure of regard, and a lot of anti-intellectual rhetoric and cant about the value of "practical experience" accompanied—to confusing effect—exhortations to the young to get themselves educated. The progressivist movement of the early part of this century continued to denigrate "the three Rs," and extol the value of "real life": an early reformist tract counts "worthy home membership, vocation, and citi-



## Information: there's growing agreement

Human history has long been described in terms of Ages whose names reflect the stages of development through which mankind has passed: the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age and so on—down to the Industrial Age, which established the foundations of our modern society.

Today, there is growing agreement that we have entered a new era, a post-industrial stage of development in which the ability to put information to use has become critical, not only to the essential production of goods, but to efforts to provide a better life for the individual, as well.

This new era is being referred to with increasing frequency as the Information Age.

### **Information in the Information Age**

Changes in our perception of information itself—its nature as well as its scope—have accompanied this profound shift of emphasis in our society.

Much has been written about the so-called "information explosion." It has been pointed out, for example, that the number of technical journals published throughout the world today exceeds 100,000, and that the total body of technical information is now doubling every ten years.

At the same time as the volume of information has been increasing dramatically, our understanding of the meaning of the term information itself has also broadened—to encompass a wide variety of timely data relating to "how things really are" across the whole spectrum of human activity.

A heartbeat, for example, can be extremely meaningful information when recorded and analyzed on sophisticated electrocardiogram equipment. So can electrical impulses reflecting the load level in a power network, or numeric digits representing the availability of a seat for you on an airplane—when processed by a modern computer.

These and a wide range of similar types of data are clearly recognized today as information, the kind of information on which we increasingly de-



# at it's the name of the age we live in.

pend for the growth and health of our economy, the smooth functioning of our institutions — and, even more important, for the quality of our individual lives.

## **Information — an inexhaustible resource**

Information is one of the few resources not in danger of exhaustion on this shrinking planet. It is unique because the supply is limitless, because it actually becomes more valuable with use and because — when properly managed and applied — it can greatly enhance our use of all our other resources, natural, human and economic.

One reason, of course, that information has proved to be such a dynamic resource is the fact that there exists today a remarkable technological capacity for dealing with it rapidly and effectively.

Through a vast array of electronic tools and techniques, mankind is able to accumulate, organize, store, interpret, retrieve and transmit information on a worldwide scale, in a volume, at a speed, and with an accuracy that would have been impossible barely two decades ago.

It is also a technology that continues to grow and that has proved to be amazingly efficient in economic terms. As advance has followed advance, the cost of processing information has steadily declined. Since the 1950's, the cost of performing 100,000 calculations on an IBM computer has fallen from \$1.26 to less than one cent — and the downward trend continues.

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## STUDENTS OF THE SUBJECTIVE

zenship" goals of first importance. Thus did the life-adjustment movement nicely answer the needs of a business world whose structure was becoming more bureaucratic. For William Whyte's organization man, the cultivation of a strong individual character was less important than that of a "well-rounded personality." It was then, when the practical ideal became the pleasant individual happily adjusted to life in a consumer society, that utilitarianism sought to mate with therapy, that he might father a brood of good team players.

A FRIEND WITH WHOM I leafed through a New School catalogue, stunned by the variety and minuteness of the possibilities for self-concern and self-improvement, everything from "how to deepen one's intimacy potential" to "how to give an art-world party," suggested in a spirit of jocularly that the university might soon offer a course in remedial toilet training for adults who had grown dissatisfied with themselves in even that most fundamental regard. I should have guessed that I would see even this bizarre prediction threaten to come true. During a session of Clara Stewart Flagg's class, "How to Educate Your Dreams to Work for You," the instructor suddenly demanded a show of hands from the class. "How many of you have constipation or hemorrhoids?" she asked.

Few were eager to respond to this at first, but after a few brave souls had raised their hands, the rest grew bold enough to realize that of course their own intestinal problems were a legitimate matter for general discussion.

"That's because you've got your psychological feces all piled up inside!" declared Mrs. Flagg when most of the class members had signaled their private discomfort. "Most of you are just so damned tight-assed, hung up on internalizing your negative energies. Dialogue with your negativity!" she exhorted. "Get rid of your possessiveness!"

Mrs. Flagg went on to compare the retentiveness of her constipated students to the insecurity of those "shopping baggers" who wander aimlessly through the city parks collecting scraps of paper and rancid sandwiches.

To counteract this and almost every other problem which was "shared" in the class, Mrs. Flagg suggested "dialoguing with the negatives," stirring them to a full froth and skimming off the scum that floated to the surface. To this end, she asked her students in a random fashion to relate recurrent dreams or fragments of recent dreams to the class; she would then identify the negative element and advise "dialoguing." Since, however, the class was very large, and individual histories couldn't possibly be introduced, only the most generalized interpretations ("If you're on a beach, you're beached! If you're in a bar, something's barring you!") could be offered. The remainder of class time was taken up by Mrs. Flagg's recollections of her "nine times around the world" travels with her former husband, an anthropologist named Kilton Stewart, who had studied the Malaysian Sanoi, a tribe which, Mrs. Flagg informed the class, "gets all its music from dreams, as well as its inspiration for social interaction." The disjointedness of this approach—trying to yoke a diversity of quickly observed individual experiences together by means of some secondhand observations of how a non-Western culture has interpreted its collective experience—created a virtual anarchy of method in the class: one minute the instructor would be expounding on the need to adopt primitive wisdom in our own hung-up society, while the next she would be demanding of a startled young man in the front row, "How do you feel about *your* phallic energies?" A wild confusion of procedure developed from the general vagueness of purpose, for what really had the students come to learn? With no subject matter, there was no way to structure the proceedings, so arbitrary observations had to carry the day. Such are the difficulties created when one tries to implement a "spontaneous structure."

In many of the classes I attended, a common whining note harmonized with the cacophony of generalized gripes against society at large. Perhaps because people understood that the kinds of courses they were taking were supposed to enable them to *change*, they seemed in need of a shadowy image of authority against which they could struggle to define themselves, and "society," being sufficiently vague and undefined, fell naturally in their way.

Such rebelliousness is of course therapeutic in concept, but whereas in real therapy the patient is charged with the task of understanding how he or she has internalized authority, an eight-week course demands so much less in the way of personal introspection that the most obvious straw man will do just as well. The teachers themselves showed no reluctance to fall into the antiauthoritarian spirit of things and rail against the world at large.

In an afternoon session of "Identity and Meaning in Life," all present declared themselves in firm opposition to society, the family, schools, institutions and the "Judeo-Christian tradition," while the professor, Dr. Josef Garai, contented himself with nothing less than a denunciation of the history of Western culture. "Western society refuses to recognize intuition," he fumed. "We are taught to be nothing but cognition machines. No empathy! No right brain! Only use one hemisphere!" Again, what was at issue was so all encompassing that the proceedings were free to fall into complete anarchy, giving the professor an opportunity to show his skill at throwing into confusion anyone who attempted to fix upon a particular problem. "I'm fifty years old," confided one woman, "and I'm still trying to win my parents' approval. I want to know what I can do about that." "That's a question one should be asking at the age of twenty," came the response. "Yes, I know, but I'm asking it now," said the woman. "Well, I'm an optimist," the professor assured her. "Let's look ahead to another question."

There would appear to be little reason for optimism in any of this; middle-aged people are wandering around asking "Who am I?" and those whom they have elected to ask are failing to tell them that only narcissistic children believe that *I* exists apart from actions or thoughts or values, that *I* is an authentic creature who can "switch options" whenever the mood strikes. An adult playground, such as the New School threatens to become, perpetuates this illusion, for the new method of substituting subjective experience for subject matter in the service of some ill-defined therapeutic ideal keeps the attention of the student focused on the fugitive *I*. And that *I*, rather than being offered a chance to expand its knowledge or skills in the hope of achieving



measure of mastery over the world, instead exhorted to simply define self, to stand up and say, *This is who am*.

The hugely successful course in how be a single, taught by an attractive ung psychologist named Janet Page the New School last winter, proved perfect paradigm of this method, for re no conceivable subject matter uld block the uninhibited and ran- m exchange of individual experiences. The revivalistic spirit obtained on the eral occasions I observed the class, th students simply bearing witness themselves: "I'm single and proud it," many proclaimed amid scattered plause and general nods of encourage- ent; one waited only for the Amens follow. "Just being able to say u're single will help you change," net Page promised, making an equa- n peculiar to revivalistic faith-heal- g: believe, confess, and you will be ved. What's missing from this equa- n is the notion that self-improvement ust be attended by the development character, and that character is axed forth as one achieves mastery er the world outside oneself.

IN A THICKENING dusk of somber ocher shades, a host of discarded deities stare impassively from a mural which enshrouds in dark nes the room where Janet Page's class ets. A benevolent Lenin, a staunchly oletarian party of Mexican peasants, stolid conference-tableful of stylized inese—all recall an age now remote, the ghosts that haunt the walls of e singles class were meant to be he- es, meant to be gods. Never mind e crudity of their politics or the cari- tured style of their depiction; what ey now so incongruously call to mind the ideology of an age which as- med that the representation of heroes uld inspire in those who beheld them e desire to develop a measure of self- mastery, and bring the force of their w strength to bear upon the world. t it has been instead the peculiar odern fate of these heroes to preside noticed over a group of singles who ve come in their middle years seek- g not inspiration or knowledge, but her simply themselves. Indeed, the sky mural bears witness to the twi- ht of these gods. |||||

HARPER'S/JUNE 1977

# AWARD WINNER

A 1977 National Magazine Award recently was presented to *Harper's* for "The Anti-Social Cell"—an authoritative and understandable compendium of what is now known about cancer." The judges praised this special 16-page report for its extraordinary clarity, compassion, and serviceability. The series of articles appeared in the June 1976 issue. Reprints are available for one dollar.

In its forthcoming issues, *Harper's* will present similar special reports, "Cities" and "The Minds of Children."

The National Magazine Awards are administered by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. The prize is represented by a reproduction of Alexander Calder's stabile "Elephant."

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Feminists and Other Useful Fanatics  
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# WITNESSES OF THE NEW ORDER

Exploring the labyrinths of the permanent government

by Tom Bethell

**T**O TALK TO people in the White House these days about the prospects of reorganizing the federal bureaucracy is to talk to people often weighed down by feelings of despair. What had looked so easy from a distance is turning out to be as difficult as rolling back the incoming tide. Consider the magnitude of President Carter's task. There are about 350,000 federal civilian employees in and around Washington, but when Mr. Carter arrived in town he could make only 2,200 appointments from what is known as the "Plum Book." This document, which is in fact yellow and entitled *Policy and Supporting Positions*, presents the Administration with the list of available patronage. The list has been getting smaller in recent years, which emphasizes the point that the government work force, superficially so homogeneous, is in fact quite sharply divided into two classes, union and non-union. About 85 percent of

Tom Bethell is a Washington editor of Harper's.

the General Schedule (GS) employees who work in the large downtown bureaucracies are unionized. The comparatively tiny number of political appointees who arrive with a new administration and the Legislative branch (a small town set on the Hill, surrounded by a large city) are non-union.

Between these two groups a quiet class war is being waged. The unionized civil servants, with their allies in the Civil Service Commission—one of the most mysterious and powerful of Washington's institutions—are staking out a larger and larger portion of the government terrain, at the expense of the non-union political arrivistes.

One of the most important distinctions between these two classes is that the civil-service bureaucrats have what amounts to tenure, whereas the political appointees are precariously situated. They are the beneficiaries of patronage, but they can be fired as quickly as they were hired. They rise quickly to prominence, but can fall

as quickly to obscurity. Similarly in Capitol Hill. After the 1976 election 3,000 people out of a total of about 39,000 on the Hill found themselves at least temporarily without jobs.

**I**T IS TRUE, of course, that the Plum Book appointees do indeed have the plum jobs. To observe the contrast let us pay a visit to the Executive Office Building, an elaborate gray wedding-cake affair next to the White House, where a young man recently arrived from the Sunbelt is assisting President Carter in his duties. Before he arrives I sit briefly in his outer office, where three secretaries with lunch trays on their desks are leafing through dictionaries. They are working at a daily chore: the crossword puzzle. There is profound seriousness in the building. A tall door opens and I am beckoned into the young man's office. We admire the appointments and the tall ceiling. But for him they are only temporary, he says. He won't be here forever. Not that there is much he can do with the perquisites anyway. But he does earn \$40,000 a year more. He tells me that the secretaries outside have been there for years (they saw Nixon come and go) but earn only one-half to one-third as much as he does.

It made me aware of the tensions that exist between the two classes of government. One also recalled that Jimmy Carter, like Richard Nixon before him, is now making a determined effort to get control of the government. It made me worry for my friend, and wonder if the secretaries weren't quietly plotting his downfall. Perhaps, like Madame Defarge's knitting, the



Andrea Albahae



It has happened before. Nixon tried to wrest back portions of the civil-service empire, to "politicize" it. His come-tax returns soon enough appeared in the public prints. By the way, what happened to Nixon's double agents within the bureaucracy? I asked a woman who works at the State Department this question. "They're marked," she said. "They're known. They've been isolated. One of the main things the Carter transition team did was to find out who these people were and neutralize them." There are plenty of out-of-the-way offices for such people. Since they are now career employees, they effectively can't be fired. It takes too long. There are so many grievance procedures, arbitration boards, and impasse panels that it's easier to isolate them in obscure corridors.

John Byington, head of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which came into being in 1973 and now has 900 employees and a \$40 million budget (by the time he came on the job last year the only "standard" he had promulgated was one affecting the design of swimming-pool slides), told me that he once tried to fire someone but it took two or three other people working full-time for months, generating a thick file, and he eventually concluded that it wasn't worth the trouble. "You end up having to promote them in order to get another agency to take them off your hands," he said.

When you talk to people in the White House about these matters you get the impression of people who arrived at their desks after the Inauguration and found complex manuals of procedure awaiting telling them what they could do and what they couldn't. Of the Plum Book, Jim King, a personnel director at the White House, said, "I noticed that the Plum Book of 1961 was a fairly hefty document, and the Plum Book of 1977 is a much lighter document. I don't know, some people tell me the numbers are the same. I'm just basically a simple character, but if one book is bigger and thicker..." His voice trailed off. "The removal of the Post Office from political control has got something to do with it," he admitted. "But the thing I found was that, although the num-

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ber of appointments in the Plum Book may have remained fairly constant over the years, the federal bureaucracy in the senior grades has grown enormously. The number of career positions in the so-called supergrades has grown by about 200 percent."

Frank Mankiewicz, who has worked for Robert F. Kennedy, George McGovern, and NBC, said that while he was admittedly "a spoils-system man," he believed that the number of political appointments available has gone down, "that although the book seems to show 2,200 names, in fact many of these are now filled by people who are within the civil service." The whole thing began when Charles Guiteau shot President Garfield, Mankiewicz told me. Guiteau was a "disappointed office seeker," and in reaction to the assassination Congress passed the Pendleton Act, which was the original civil-service act. "Since then it's been expanded and refined," Mankiewicz said, "and now it takes up just about everybody. I think we've gone much too far just to avenge Charles Guiteau."

I HAVE USED the term *union* to characterize civil-service employees, but this admittedly does have its misleading aspects. It suggests laborers who do such useful things as dig coal out of the ground and put up buildings. What do the government workers actually do? I decided to take a look at the Labor Department one day, this being one of the less clear-cut bureaucracies. The department is housed in a gigantic office building recently opened on the Mall. On the ground floor there is a large auditorium resembling a concert hall, and huge murals. I dropped in on a friend of mine who was a recent appointee to the department—one of the Plum Book 2,200. We admired his tall ceilings. After lunch we admired the Labor Department library. It seemed to be about the size of a university library. A few people were sitting around turning the pages of newspapers. All very quiet and remote from the problems of the nation. One passed down long corridors with closed doors marked with such insignia as OAH-S-I

Lab. Impossible to tell what the 7,000 people behind these doors were doing. After a long walk I found my way to the Office of Public Information. There I inquired about the ongoing negotiations between the Department of Labor and Local 12 of the American Federation of Government Employees, and was handed a press release. "Based upon evidence indicating that voluntary efforts have not been exhausted," the document said, "the Impasses Panel determined that negotiations should start again on all unresolved issues."

It gave nothing away, but I had been told that something important was going on. I asked for more information, and another man was sent for. "You need some background on the September 3 memorandum," Ronald Schell told me. The September 3 memorandum deals with "merit staffing." (The use of the term *merit* in civil service parlance was a public-relations triumph. Before the Garfield shooting, that is, the government was entirely staffed by political appointees. The Civil Service Commission started up in 1883 under the banner of "merit." Today that banner threatens to smother Washington. Under it, government is becoming isolated not only from political influence but also from political responsibility.)

Bearing this in mind, I asked Mr. Schell to explain the September 3 memorandum. "The union has proposed that hiring be restricted to unit employees with the exception of entry levels," he said. Meaning? "Meaning," he explained, "that everyone outside Washington, everyone outside the department, even, would be excluded from new hiring, except at the lowest levels." All department vacancies will be filled by people already working in the building. Outsiders can keep out.

What about the Impasses Panel? I asked. Apparently it's an arbitration board of some kind, available to federal employees "rather than have them resort to self-help." Self-help means to go on strike. Federal workers aren't allowed to strike, but it has been suggested that this may be a blessing in disguise for them, because of the possibility that they might not be missed.

On my way out of the Labor Department building I was introduced to a woman who, I was told, "knows a lot about this place." I asked her if she knew her way around the building.



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Listen," she said, "when I go outside this office I take a large ball of string with me."

**T**HE NEXT DAY I took a ball of string with me to the Civil Service Commission. Inside these buildings you sense an appropriate analogy between architecture and bureaucracy. Corridors double back on themselves, and you find yourself back at the starting point. I walked past one door marked "Office of Assistant to the Assistant Executive Director for Regional Affairs." There were many empty offices with family photographs on desks. Meetings were visibly in progress in conference rooms—pipe-smokers sitting at round tables just like college professors. These government bureaucracies more and more seem to resemble small universities.

Among its other tasks, the Civil Service Commission, which employs 3,500 people in Washington, writes "job standards." The lesser agencies have "job classifiers"—they earn \$20,000 a year or thereabouts—and then civil service checks these classifications against their own standards. I was referred to "Title 5, U.S. Code, Chapter 51," an excellent guide in these matters. "In comparison with the GS-7 level," I read, "GS-9 teachers plan and organize their course work independently," but who for what they taught I couldn't make out.

"Grade level determines pay, which is what most people are concerned about," my man told me with a devilish little chuckle. Then he told me that he would have to leave in a minute because he couldn't keep his four o'clock car pool waiting. But he had a few more minutes. A GS-9 step one is paid \$14,097, he told me, by way of illustration. Then next year he moves on automatically to step two (\$14,567). Or he may be promoted to GS-11 (\$17,056). (For some reason too complex to explain, even-number grades are skipped at this level.) As in universities, there has been a fair amount of "grade inflation" in the government. In 1960, for example, the average GS grade, government-wide, was 6.74. Today the figure is 8.01. (Fewer privates and more generals, in other words.) The average federal wage when Kennedy became President was \$5,705.

When Carter became President, the figure had risen to \$15,343.

In January 1962, Kennedy signed Executive Order 10988 permitting unions to organize the federal work force. By 1964 12 percent of federal workers were so organized. Today that figure has risen to 68 percent (including postal workers). By contrast, only 25 percent of all American workers are in unions.

Annual turnover of federal employees is thought to be about 10 percent, but the figure varies widely from agency to agency. (The Civil Service Commission is apparently a popular place to work, with a turnover rate between 3 and 4 percent.) At present Carter has a partial "hiring freeze" in effect. Since March 1 only three out of four vacancies can be filled. But past experience has shown that if such freezes stay in effect for too long, Congress comes to the rescue and melts them away bit by bit, attaching riders to appropriations bills exempting first one, then another, agency from the freeze.

One comes away from these federal buildings with the distinct impression that they are housing thousands upon thousands of people so well hidden in the bureaucratic maze (organizational and linguistic, as well as architectural) that they end up being responsible only to themselves. As long as the government performs its most necessary functions—the weapons systems are kept well-oiled, the Social Security checks arrive in the mail, and a few well-tailored gents are available to shake hands with the Russians—there is scope for a good deal of elaborately concealed welfare, which, for the sake of appearances and maintenance of personal pride, entails driving to large office buildings and muddling about with memoranda.

**B**UT THE MOST striking feature of government these days is the extent to which it is turning itself into a self-improvement institution for its employees. I have mentioned the similarity between it and a university. To a large extent Washington gives the appearance of quietly transforming itself into a huge quasi-campus. On a Labor Department bulletin board, for example, I noticed a "course offering" in "Magnetic Patterns of the English Language." Also

promulgated was the "Department of Labor General Education Program," as follows: "The GEP cycle consists of 120 hours of instruction, 1½ hours a day, five days a week, Feb 23 to July 1, 9 to 10:30 a.m. 1. General Math Ability. 2. Correctness and Effectiveness of Expression. 3. Interpretation of Reading in Social Studies and Natural Science. 4. Interpretation of Literary Materials." All during working hours, you will notice.

Then there is the Department of Agriculture's "Graduate School," which grants no degrees, and is only an "instrumentality of government," I was told, and receives no federal monies, but which has about 20,000 "students," 85 percent of them in the federal government, and the courses are in most cases free if the government worker can show that the course is "job related." The list of the courses that might be, at some point, job related, shows not only how extensive government has become, but also how widespread are the opportunities for self-improvement within the government. An Agriculture Department employee read me this list of courses:

"Graphic arts, audio-visual communications, editing, journalism, writing, speech, literature, foreign languages, library techniques, photography, computer sciences, financial management, accounting, legal administration, management techniques, personnel administration, property management, mathematics, statistics, typing, shorthand, biological sciences, environmental sciences, engineering, surveying, mapping, economics, human relations. And a variety of liberal studies that range from genealogy to calligraphy.

"Our primary purpose," she said, "is to train federal employees to improve the services of the government, and whatever functions the government must perform, we offer courses in that area." In short, just as government is restricting entry to all but those at the lowest level, so it is finding it necessary to educate those within government up to the level of those who are being excluded from entry at the higher levels. As government becomes more bureaucratized, more isolated from "small politics," so it is increasingly becoming a mechanism for the betterment of its employees, rather than for the nation as a whole. ■■■

HARPER'S/JUNE 1977



# SOMEHOW, SCOTCH BOTTLED ELSEWHERE ISN'T QUITE THE SAME

Contrary to popular belief, many more brands of Scotch are bottled in America than in Scotland. They are bulk shipped and bottled here, often using municipal water.

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# INSIDE THE VOLCANO

The Mexican revolution is always possible

by Gene Lyons

*Next morning, we came to a broad causeway and continued our march toward Iztapalapa. And when we saw all those cities and villages built in the water, and other great towns on dry land, and that straight and level causeway leading to Mexico, we were astounded. These great towns and cues and buildings rising from the water, all made of stone, seemed like an enchanted vision from the tale of Amadis. Indeed, some of our soldiers asked whether it was not all a dream. . . .*

*And when we entered the city of Iztapalapa, the sight of the palaces in which they lodged us! They were very spacious and well-built, of magnificent stone, cedar wood, and the wood of other sweet-smelling trees, with great rooms and courts, which were a wonderful sight, and all covered with awnings of woven cotton.*

*When we had taken a good look at all this, we went to the orchard and garden, which was a marvelous place both to see and walk in. I was never tired of noticing the diversity of trees and the various scents given off by each, and the paths choked with roses and other flowers, and the many local fruit-trees and rose-bushes, and the pond of fresh water. . . . Then there were birds of many breeds and varieties which came to the pond. I say again that I stood looking at it, and thought that no land like it would ever be discovered in the whole world. . . . But today all that I then saw is overthrown and destroyed; nothing is left standing.*

*I have already described the manner of their sacrifices. They strike open the wretched Indian's chest with flint knives and hastily tear out the palpitating heart which, with the blood, they present to their idols in whose name they have performed the sacrifice. Then they cut off the arms, thighs, and head, eating the arms and thighs at their ceremonial banquets. The head they hang up on a beam, and the body of the sacrificed man is not eaten but given to the beasts of prey. They also had many vipers in this accursed house, and poisonous snakes with something that sounds like a bell in their tails. . . . They were fed on the bodies of sacrificed Indians and the flesh of the dogs that they bred. We know for certain, too, that when they drove us out of Mexico and killed over eight hundred and fifty of our soldiers, they fed those beasts and snakes on their bodies for many days, as I shall relate in due course.*

—Bernal Díaz del Castillo

*True History of the Conquest of New Spain, 1632*

THERE IS NO FRONTIER anywhere in the world quite like it. It is as if Algeria were to border directly upon the South of France, or West Germany upon the United States. To enter Mexico overland from the United States is to travel, in a matter of a few miles, the vast distance between those who have

and those who have not, to be stunned into recognizing what most Americans, in our enormous self-absorption, forget: the first couple of thousand dollars make the greatest difference; virtually all of us live closer to the Rockefellers than we do to the overwhelming majority of the world's people.

*Gene Lyons writes a book column for The Nation, and is a regular contributor to Texas Monthly.*



In our literature the journey south has always seemed a descent into the infernal regions of the human spirit, the zone of torpor, lust, rage, and barbarism. Norman Mailer, in his Hemingway period, speaks of the bullfight, which measures "the great distance a man can go from the worst in himself to the best." The Mexico Mailer saw appears in the works and often in the lives of the writers who have gone there and written about it: Katherine Anne Porter; Tennessee Williams; B. Traven; Jack Kerouac; Wright Morris; Hart Crane, who drowned himself by jumping off the ship bringing him home from Veracruz; and Ambrose Bierce, who vanished forever during the revolution of 1913, leaving in his wake a letter to his niece: "To be a Gringo in Mexico—ah, that is euthanasia!"

By and large the English have seen it the same way. Writers as diverse as Malcolm Lowry, D.H. Lawrence, and Graham Greene have found in Mexico their own visions of hell. Lawrence, who went in search of Quetzalcoatl, the feathered snake of regeneration, was moved to observe to his friend Witter Bynner, "It's all of one piece . . . what the Aztecs did, what Cortés did, and what Díaz did—the wholesale, endless cruelty. . . . The heart has been cut out of the land. That's why hearts had to be cut out of its people. It goes on and on and always will go on. It's a land of death." The protagonist of Lowry's *Under the Volcano* is murdered by Mexican police; his corpse is thrown into a *barranca* with that of a dead dog. Graham Greene in the 1930s feigned an interest in the Mayan ruins at Palenque in the jungles of Chiapas, in order to be allowed passage through the state of Tabasco. After riding two days on muleback to reach Palenque, he was moved to observe, "It seemed to me that this wasn't a country to live in at all, with the heat and the desolation; it was a country to die in and leave only ruins behind. . . . One was looking at the future as well as the past."

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### State of crisis

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**L**IKE ALL BORDERS between very different cultures, the one between the United States and Mexico seems a kind of mirror, returning to the earnest gazer on the other side a reversed simulacrum of himself. Most Anglo-American writers have gone to Mexico in flight from the industrial middle class, from what Greene has more than once called "the empty, sinless, graceless chromium world." Seeking heaven or hell, they have tended, in a country of economic extremes, to find it.

The traveler from the North plays out the scenes of his moral romance in a landscape conveniently dramatic, on a stage furnished with bandits, starving peasants, and rumors of revolution. Geographical distance in this regard is not so important as imaginative distance. But Mexico is, at least in the schematic sense, a Western country. Not only does it share 2,000 miles of frontier with an overdeveloped nation it calls "el coloso," but it is filled with American investment and "el know-how." It is almost impossible to overstate the impact of things American upon the everyday life and imagination of the Mexican people. Sixty-three percent of Mexico's exports, 57 percent of her imports are to or from the United States. American banks have lent Mexico the greater part of her foreign indebtedness of \$2 billion, the highest such debt in the world. A huge proportion, perhaps more than 80 percent of the patents, are held by American firms.

Mexicans drive American cars when they can afford them, although they are made in Mexico and cost much more than they do here. When they cannot afford them they drive Volkswagens and Datsuns, also made there. Along with the rest of the world they drink Pepsi and Coca-Cola, eat hamburgers, and yearn for Kentucky Fried Chicken. They watch *Bonanza* and *Perry Mason*, and they kill each other with American guns bought from the proceeds of smuggling heroin and marijuana into the United States. As economic imperialism and solitary hope, as protector and threat, the United States is regarded by Mexicans with a strength of emotion that surprises us, since we think of Mexico hardly at all, and then more often than not as melodrama.

As diligent readers of the newspapers and newsmagazines know, Mexico is in a state of crisis, that most popular and indigenous of North American art forms. Her economy is a shambles, the so-called Mexican miracle of rapid growth during the Sixties having given way to an inflation rate in excess of 30 percent and a labor force of fewer than 17 million in a country of 63 million. Matters are complicated by a population growth of 3.7 percent at which rate Mexico's population will double in twenty years. The Mexico City newsmagazine *Proceso*, quoting government figures, predicts that 1,195,000 Mexican youths will reach the employment age each year between last year and 1982. If things go as well as expected there will be jobs for about 300,000 of them at a time.

Agriculture, which employs just under half of Mexico's workers, is in disarray. In recent years the country has had to import food—



despite its supplying roughly 60 percent of the winter vegetables consumed in the United States. The *Secretaria del Trabajo* (Labor Department) estimates that of 8 million persons employed in farming, 5.6 million earn less than 300 pesos a month (roughly \$15). In the southern state of Oaxaca, Mexican government statistics show that 74 percent of the population exist on a family income of less than 200 pesos (\$10) a month, 87 percent live in dwellings of one or two rooms, only 25 percent have electricity (fewer than that running water), and fully 87 percent cannot afford to buy milk, eggs, or meat. They live on beans (prices up 300 percent since 1975) and cornmeal tortillas (up 400 percent in the same period). A recent study in Oaxaca showed a 50 percent increase between 1972 and 1977 in the rate of illiteracy among persons of school age and older. Of Oaxaca's 2.5 million citizens, more than 812,000 are unable to read and write. Not only is the government incapable of building schools sufficient for the population, but many children must work at menial tasks, or are kept at home simply because they lack shoes, or clothes, or, because of their diet, the mental capacity with which to attend.

Similar conditions exist all over the country. Mexico has no form of unemployment insurance or public welfare. Mexico City, which offers the best begging and often the only hope of employment, however illusory, currently has 10 to 14 million inhabitants, and is growing at a rate that will double its size in six years, so that it will soon be far and away the

largest city in the world. At the moment it is said to have almost a half-million whores.

**D**URING THE PRESIDENCY of Luís Echeverría, which ended last December after six years of mostly empty promises, there was much debate within the country and in other interested quarters as to whether Mexico did indeed, as Echeverría insisted, belong in the Third World. Like the argument about whether a good boxer can beat a good wrestler, such a question may seem more one of pride and point of view than anything else, and as such purely symbolic. *Purely* perhaps, but *merely* never.

Mexico is a capitalist country that has for decades invoked the shade of Emiliano Zapata in its election campaigns and employed left-wing muralists to adorn its public buildings with government-approved socialist surrealism borrowed from Orozco and Diego Rivera. The dominant, and, for all practical purposes, the only political organization calls itself the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Revolutionary Institutional Party, or PRI). Here more than in most other countries the art of maintaining power requires the careful manipulation of dangerous symbols. The barest knowledge of Mexican social history suggests that most of its population enjoys objective material conditions as good as or better than ever before. If it were possible for persons on the ground to console themselves with the buzzard's-eye view, which has always given the

**"The United States is regarded by Mexicans with a strength of emotion that surprises us, since we think of Mexico hardly at all, and then more often than not as melodrama."**





best perspective on Mexican history, one might simply observe that Mexican medical care and sanitation improved sufficiently in the second third of the twentieth century so that the infant mortality rate fell from almost 100 per 1,000 live births to half that, and that for forty years there were no civil wars or large-scale rebellions.

This is the line pretty much taken by the boosters. In order to hew to that line, however, one has to ignore almost everything that cannot be expressed by numbers. For all of its closeness to the United States, and despite the more than 50 million Americans who cross the border each year (although fewer than 2 million venture deeper than twenty-five miles, and most of those to sterilized tourist sanctuaries), Mexico remains more foreign than Europe. It is not just that we are rich and they poor, as Octavio Paz says, nor even that our "legacy is Democracy, Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution" while Mexico's is "the Counter-reformation, Monopoly and Feudalism." There is nothing in the Mexican past, whether Hispanic or Amerindian, to inspire the cultural optimism upon which our society and economic system rest (as does classical Marxism). The ideas of progress and of the almost infinite malleability of nature and history simply do not exist. Paz writes in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*: "Man is alone everywhere. But the solitude of the Mexican, under the great stone night of the high plateau that is still inhabited by insatiable gods, is very different from that of the North American, who wanders in an abstract world of machines, fellow citizens and moral precepts."

The Mexicans want what we have got, and if getting what we have involves the destruction of everything that makes them what they are, then with the other half of themselves they are ready for exactly that. Hence there is tension in the air, an almost palpable feeling of inward conflict that cannot help but take outward forms, and which expresses itself everywhere, from the way the people dress to their politics and the stories they tell.

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### Ciudad Juárez

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THE BORDER ITSELF is not so immediately dramatic as the traveler seeking vivid contrasts might wish. El Paso, Texas, tapers off culturally and economically into Juárez, Chihuahua, and one sees very few Anglos on Stanton Street in the last mile-and-a-half before the bridge. Between the dying hotels, the street is lined with vendors of cheap and used clothing, furniture, kerosene

heaters, and previously owned hand-wringer washing machines. The peso devaluation late last year had the effect of doubling prices for the Mexicans who normally cross over to the American side to shop. Only the sellers of television sets and other small appliances seem to be prospering in the general decline. Although their products are still cheaper than the Mexican counterparts, and though it is in theory illegal to import them, they are subject only to small tariffs in the form of bribes to Mexican border guards.

Petty bribery, known colloquially as "*la mordida*," or "the bite," is Mexico's way of paying its civil service. One cause of what seems to Americans the excessive pride of office and officiousness displayed by Mexicans in uniforms and behind desks is not only that such a job is a badge of middle-class status in a country where that really means something, but also it is every man his own tax collector, a universally understood practice that seems outrageous to us only if we manage to forget all that we may know, of, say, building inspectors in New Jersey. It is not for nothing that boarding a train in Mexico City requires three tickets, two of which must be stamped eight times each by two different stamps, or that cashing a traveler's check in a resort town demands visits to three bank officials.

Drugstore windows on the American side advertise ginseng, "the root of life," as an aphrodisiac. A crayoned sign assures the out of pocket that SUS RECETAS DE "WELFARE" SON BIENVENIDAS. The last building on the American side shows sex films billed as XXX.

Immediately across the border it is all dentists. Juárez has literally hundreds of them within a few blocks of the Río Bravo. Signs advise where and when to go for the Rotary luncheon and the "Club de Leones." The border towns are in general the most prosperous places in Mexico. Juárez houses the maids and





gardeners, the short-order cooks and whores of El Paso, not to mention the importers and exporters, bankers, moneychangers, and smugglers who cluster along any border. Their countrymen further south are not overfond of those who live along the border, considering them chiselers, hustlers, and cultural bastards, just as they tend to be skeptical about the sufferings of American Chicanos, whose difficulties millions of Mexicans would give anything to have.

But even on the first-class train from Ciudad Juárez down to Chihuahua (fare forty-five pesos, about \$2 for 233 miles) certain economic differences are immediately apparent. The ubiquitous luggage is a grocery bag of brown paper or plastic mesh. And not very far out of the station the electric lines and the paving quit, and the thoroughfares become wandering dirt tracks or trash-strewn gullies.

The city of Chihuahua has little to offer in the way of attractions, and, except as the eastern terminus of the spectacular train ride through the mountains to the west coast agricultural center of Los Mochis, would tempt few travelers to spend the night. Like most places in Mexico it has had its share of bloodshed. Hidalgo, the father of Mexican independence from Spain, was executed and decapitated here in 1811, his remains buried in a local church while his head was exhibited about the countryside. Chihuahua was also Pancho Villa's home, and his widow maintains a private museum to his memory at La Quinta Luz, but you must find your own way, for there are no signs, not even on the building itself. Inside you may see the car in which Villa was riding when assassinated, looking like a souvenir from the set of *Bonnie and Clyde*. Señora Villa, who by now is very old, must run the museum as a living, since Villa was never canonized by the state like the other revolutionary figures, and she draws no government pension.

It is best not to interrupt her monologue once she has begun it, as she has memorized the whole thing and must start again from the beginning if she stops for a question. At first I thought the Villa museum a perfect memorial to the Mexican past, whose seemingly endless catalogue of plagues, rebellions, massacres, and betrayals one likes to assume are forever his.

I went to Sinaloa.

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## Unreported deaths

SINALOA, OF WHICH Culiacán is the capital, is the richest agricultural state in Mexico, and, with its neighbor Sonora to the north, the site of some of the bitterest and most violent conflicts over land ownership of late last year. One-quarter of the country's food crops are grown in Sinaloa on 3 percent of its arable land. Most of the winter tomatoes eaten in the United States are exported from a narrow strip of irrigated coastal land in the valleys along the Pacific.

In Culiacán they have rediscovered one of history's great truths: the mystery drains from human flesh when you blow holes in it or dismember it with explosives. Last year in Culiacán that discovery was made precisely 2.8 times a day for a brief period in autumn, and over 300 times during the year. That is surely a nongovernmental peacetime record for a western city with fewer than 200,000 inhabitants.

One of the things they are killing each other for is money. The United States Drug Enforcement Agency estimates that of the \$8 million that enters Mexico every day through dope smuggling, 70 to 80 percent comes through Culiacán. In its way the heroin business is as exploitive a form of small-scale neo-colonialism as one is likely to find, dangerous and labor-intensive at the grower's level, with profits

**"There is nothing in the Mexican past to inspire the cultural optimism on which our society and economic system rest. The idea of progress and the almost infinite malleability of nature and history simply do not exist."**



Jerry Sarapochiello



multiplying almost exponentially at each step. A kilo of raw opium gum, or *goma*, is said to bring about 6,000 pesos, or \$300, to the *campesinos* who raise it, and represents a few months of hand labor. The same quantity of gum can be sold to a processor for \$15,000 once it has been brought down from the mountains, and after refining and cutting has an alleged U.S. street value of \$1 million.

The *pistoleros* are the enforcers, the soldiers in Culiacán's little wars. They drive air-conditioned LTDs, the most luxurious cars available, without license plates to demonstrate their contempt, as well as to tip off the traffic police that they are not to be trifled with. There is no prestige in wasting a traffic cop. Citizens tell stories of having had guns pressed to their heads for honking at intersections, of raped daughters whose avenging brothers were shot dead, of children in the new suburbs along the river terrorized by the children of fathers who kill for a living, of half-hour gun battles in which each side carries off its dead and wounded and the police never show up at all. Officially, it never happened. Unless they are particularly spectacular, like the machine gunning of two municipal policemen on the cathedral square a few months ago, or the fusillade that killed an ambitious assistant police chief a few days after I left, murders are rarely reported in any of the city's newspapers. Questions about arrests and convictions bring derisive snorts from residents, some of whom find amusement in keeping score among the combatants.

Montenegro sometimes goes without his license plates too; he does not wish to be easily identified. He carries a .9 mm automatic pistol in his waistband, a .38 police special revolver in his glove compartment, and keeps a .22 caliber Uzi submachine gun and a few extra clips close at hand. Montenegro is a newspaper reporter who shows his arsenal to anybody who asks, as if by way of announcing to interested parties that he does not intend to go out quietly. A small, almost frail-looking man in his early thirties, Montenegro wears a moustache, tinted eyeglasses, and doubleknit suits, hardly the type, it would seem, to be the object of an assassination plot by drug smugglers. A newspaper reporter is small potatoes in Mexico, a kind of petty government functionary, like the mailman. No paper in Mexico pays a living middle-class wage, and certainly not *Noroeste*, Montenegro's employer, whose offices are so festooned with waste paper, broken glass, and sweepings as to make it appear that a bomb has already hit and nobody has noticed. Most Mexican reporters earn their living by collecting envelopes filled with cash

from persons in need of good publicity, mostly government and PRI officials and businessmen. Without a payoff it is hard even to make the society page.

Before he took up journalism, Montenegro was a federal agent, and he has a reputation which he does nothing to deny, as a knower of secrets. As a stringer for several American newspapers he helped originate several of the numerous stories and television news features that have focused international attention upon the drug trade, with the result that the Mexican government is making a U.S.-assisted show of cracking down, a nuisance in some quarters, though nobody seriously thinks the trade can be shut off, nor even seriously slowed, short of what would amount to civil war.

CARLOS AGUILAR GARZA stands in front of a wall-size aviator's map of Mexico, holding a pointer. The map, made in St. Louis, divides the western and southern half of the country into three large numbered zones. With the pointer Garza indicates Zone I, of which he is in charge, comprising the states of Chihuahua, Durango, and Sinaloa, stretching from Juárez in the north to Mazatlán in the southwest, an area somewhat larger than California. Zone I is subdivided into smaller alphabetized sectors, and on an enlarged map to his right these sectors are covered with a swarm of colored pins. Each brown pin represents between ten and thirty *plantíos*, or fields, of marijuana. The green pins indicate similar concentrations of heroin poppies, the white pins plantations already destroyed. Most of the white pins are located within a few miles of Culiacán, and altogether there are perhaps twenty-five of them. Literally hundreds of the others run in a thick cluster from north to south, outlining the Sierra Madre. Garza agrees to allow photographs of what they are calling "Operation Condor," but only of the map and the back of his head. They may as well call it *Operación Pato Muerto*, Operation Dead Duck. They haven't got a chance, and while everybody knows it, nobody will say it.

"It is a war," he says "and nothing else. We have four months in which to destroy all this or we will have lost. We must not lose. We are not going to lose."

Gen. José Hernández Toledo nods. According to those sources usually deemed reliable in Mexico, in 1968, when the government sought to avoid the embarrassment of protesting students during the Olympic Games, Toledo commanded the troops who attacked and killed as many as 200 of them in one night.



His assignment here is viewed as evidence that Operation Condor is a serious one. Garza, an Assistant Attorney General in the Justice Department, has command of seventy-three federal agents and fourteen Bell jet-powered helicopters (the HUEY helicopter gunships of Vietnam) given the Mexicans by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. The general has 2,500 soldiers, teams of aerial photographers, analysts to locate the fields, and agricultural specialists to tell him when the poppies are nearly ready for harvesting and so most vulnerable for spraying. Half of the Bell helicopters have been outfitted with tanks and spray-gun outriggers and thousands of gallons of Gromoxene and Esteron 47M herbicides manufactured by the Dow Chemical Corporation.

We have armed ourselves for a press conference at the airport. What started as an exclusive for Montenegro has somehow swelled into a media event.

The helicopters transport us 180 kilometers to the dusty village of Badiraguato in the Sierra foothills, a base camp for Operation Condor, where the party lands in a pasture and makes a loose parade to the headquarters building, together with the village children and dogs. Inside the general holds forth in a whitewashed room filled with the 1,003 weapons confiscated in the first twenty days of the campaign, examining for the cameras a Chinese-made machine gun and explaining that there are enough weapons in the mountains to start a small revolution. He praises Aguilar Garza, who remains nervously off camera, and introduces the governor. A chalk board of statistics is produced, showing the destruction of 960 hectares of poppies, 713 marijuana fields, 100 tons of processed grass, and fifty arrests. The governor urges Sinaloans to quit their lowdown ways and heed the exhortation of López-Portillo, who only yesterday spoke of a revitalized and upright Sinaloa, leading the way in agriculture and industry. In the mountains behind us there are no passable roads, no electricity, no water, few schools or medical clinics. Before the advent of the heroin market, the majority of the 700,000 inhabitants of the Sierra Madre lived on a subsistence level, having no participating role in the money economy of the country at all. To the extent that they know what heroin does to people, they can perhaps be pardoned a bit for not caring very much.

Later that night I went for my last walk through the city, looking for an ice-cream cone and a shoeshine. Three hundred murders each year would empty the streets of an American city this size, but, like everywhere else in Mexico, Culiacán teems with street life in

the evenings, reinforcing the suspicion that what is going on in this city is not so much an anomaly as it is an intensification of the normal. The day of the singles bar is a long way off, but the erotic tension in the air is almost palpable. In the evening paper "*la talentosa actriz Ana Martín*" lays down the advanced line from Mexico City: Women's liberation has to do with work, not sex. A woman cannot have the same sex life as a man.

Every theater in town seems to be showing either *La Violencia del Sexo* or *El Sexo de la Violencia*. In the bookstore window the main display is an eight-volume set of the *Obras Completas de Norman Vincent Peale* laid out next to the works of Irving Wallace and Harold Robbins. By the doorway are stacked the real best-sellers in piles four feet high, *Alarma*, *Alerta*, and *La Verdad*, Mexican versions of what the *National Enquirer* was before it tried to go respectable. On the front page of *Alerta* is a closeup shot of a six-month-old dead baby with a black-and-blue bullet wound through his chest, shot, it says, by his mother's lover to stop him from crying.

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## La Manzanilla

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**T**HE VILLAGE OF La Manzanilla, Jalisco, does not appear on any map of Mexico that I have seen, nor does the gravel road that leads to it. La Manzanilla sits in the saddle of a steep hillside in a temperate region about twenty-five kilometers from the southern shore of Lake Chapala, a cigar-shaped thirty-mile-long lake that is the largest body of fresh water in the country, and very near the border between the states of Jalisco and Michoacán.

As things go in rural Mexico, La Manzanilla is a fortunate place. The climate is temperate year round—almost perfect, if what you had in mind was playing tennis or golf. The air at 6,500 feet is bracing and clear; even in midwinter and at this latitude the afternoon sun penetrates your shirt with a pleasant insistence. There is a wet season from June through September; from October through May it is as dry as Southern California. Even in the summer the afternoon temperature rarely exceeds 85 degrees; winter nights occasionally bring frost. Towns like Chapala and Ajijic, about twenty miles directly across the lake, are lined with the villas and walled-in ranch homes of expatriated Americans.

From the farmer's point of view, La Manzanilla is far from perfect. The steep hillsides retain little of the water that falls during the summer, and the soil is thin, wind-and water-

"Unless they are particularly spectacular, murders in Sinaloa are rarely reported in any of the city's newspapers.

Questions about arrests and convictions bring derisive snorts from residents."



Gene Lyons  
**INSIDE THE  
 VOLCANO**

eroded, and poor in organic materials. What crops are grown are done so for purely local consumption: corn, beans, and chili peppers.

The major source of cash income in La Manzanilla is the United States. The men of La Manzanilla began spending their summers in California, Texas, and points northward during the *bracero* program initiated due to labor shortages on American farms in World War II and continued until the early 1960s, when the U.S. Congress, under pressure from organized labor, put an end to it. From March or April through November hundreds of La Manzanilla's men migrate illegally to the "Yunaites" to find work. Most ride in the backs of trucks provided by contractors in Tijuana who charge them \$100 each for the favor. In return the men get not only transportation but jobs, apartments, and forged identity papers, often complete with a California driver's license and Social Security card.

When I met him, Willy was at the fork between the gravel road leading farther south into the hills and the narrower one that branches off to La Manzanilla. Having little to do at this season, he had that day taken the bus to the lakeside town of Jocotepec about forty kilometers away to buy some household things for his wife and mother, catching a ride back from the paved highway with a pickup load of cows. He was very glad when I happened along, as the last six kilometers to La Manzanilla are mostly uphill, and seven months a year of driving on the Southern California freeways, joined with the idleness of his winters at home, have left him, at twenty-three, a bit stout.

Willy's proper name is Guillermo Barrios Cordoba, but he prefers the nickname when speaking to Americans, as he considers that his boss in California gave it to him out of esteem and affection. "My boss tells me I am number-one weaver" is the way he puts it. Because he knows a couple of hundred words of

English, Willy sits at a loom in a nonunion textile factory at \$3 per hour rather than doing harder and dirtier manual labor at the minimum wage or less. He takes every available opportunity to practice his English, asking the word for things he does not know and repeating it several times until his pronunciation is recognizable. His boss, he says, does not know that he is *sin papeles* (without papers), which makes that gentleman very generous with his vacations, as Willy has now worked for him for five half-years. He is very proud to show off his Social Security card and to emphasize that he pays American income taxes. He pays no Mexican taxes on his American income, nor any others that he can avoid, as he considers his government a nest of thieves. "*El gobierno* wants to get rich and nothing more. They do nothing for us here but take our money."

In fact, La Manzanilla has a new hilltop reservoir and pumping station, bringing fresh water into its homes for the first time, and for the past three years it has had electricity. "All of the men on my street go to work in California," Willy says, indicating an unbroken wall of simple adobe homes crowned with shiny television antennas. In summer there are very few men between the ages of eighteen and fifty in La Manzanilla. By remaining here the average laborer could hope to earn perhaps \$750 in a very good year, and in a bad one less than \$500. In Orange County he can make that much in a month, and is able to save between \$3,500 and \$4,000 of his salary to bring home by sharing a one-bedroom apartment in Santa Ana with four other men. "There I can have a nice car—1968 Chevrolet. Here no. There I have heat and air-conditioning and a telephone. Here is one telephone for the whole village—4,000 people." Of course, in La Manzanilla he has no need of a telephone, because everybody he has ever known lives within a ten-minute walk. But Willy isn't buying any of that, and neither is anybody in his family: his wife, his father, mother, sister, and two brothers. When I asked him whether he would move his wife to California if he could do so legally, Willy's mother answered.

"We would all go if we could."

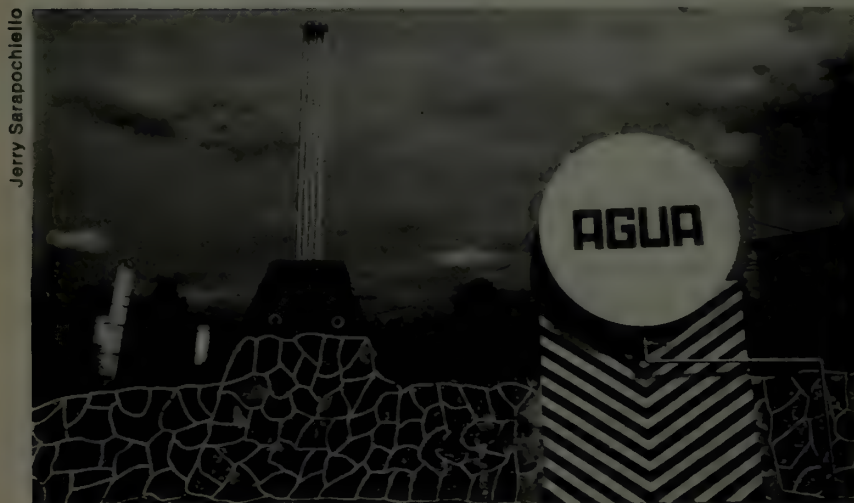
"The whole family?"

"The whole village. Who knows, maybe everyone in Mexico would go."

"Don't you think you would lose a great deal?" I asked. "The village is very beautiful. You have many friends. This is your home."

"We would all go," she repeated. "All of us. There is nothing for us in Mexico."

Willie loves Southern California and will hear no criticism of it, except that he does not understand and is a little bit afraid of blacks.



Jerry Sarapochiello



At \$3 an hour and four men to a bedroom, he thinks he is in paradise. He cannot imagine that many Americans, if they could visit his village for an afternoon, would think they wanted to change places with him. He has no illusions about the simple life, having tried it and found it difficult. If he has his way his brothers and his children will grow up to sit in the gutter in Mexico City or Los Angeles and read about babies with bullets in their chests.

**P**ERFUMED GARDEN or inferno, the Valley of Mexico is the center of the country: economic, governmental, cultural, and symbolic, its Paris, its Washington, New York, and Los Angeles combined. The Aztecs arrived from the north only 200 years before Cortés came from the east, driving out or enslaving the indigenous tribes in a series of savage wars. In the intervening time they so polluted Lake Texcoco with human waste that it was unfit for drinking. Clean water for the ruling caste of Moctezuma's fortress city of Tenochtitlán came from springs located on the hill of Chapultepec, now Mexico City's most beautiful and pleasant park and the locale of its wealthiest residential districts.

The contemporary moral symbolism of Mexican history extends back only so far as the Spanish conquerors: the conquistador is the villain to the Indian hero. A visitor ignorant of the nastier aspects of Moctezuma's rule could wander half the day through the magnificent Anthropology Museum in Chapultepec without encountering more than the merest hint of the human sacrifices that the Spaniards thought gave them an excuse, so far as they needed one, for slaughters of their own. Many Americans who visit Mexico make the familiar remark about the contrast between the finery of the churches and the poverty of the people. Fewer express bewilderment at the museum, a shrine to deities more universally respected to the north: Science and the State. The newspapers report that air pollution from the 5,000 tons of carbon monoxide and other poisons released into the atmosphere every day in Mexico City kills 70,000 persons in the valley each year, something like the number, if you are prepared for easy historical ironies and ready to give or take a few thousand, that the Aztecs are thought to have been sacrificing and eating in the years before Cortés arrived. The same geological bowl among mountains that once made the valley floor a swampy lake draining inward from all sides now traps the poisons suspended in the air from the city's 1.5 million automobiles and its heavy indus-

try. At the end of the dry season the dust storms of March and April carry human feces picked up from the slums and deposit them over the city. The destitute and the angry have been migrating here for centuries, but they no longer come in tribes and cannot expect to put the inhabitants to the sword.

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### Mexico City

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**A**N OFFICIAL STUDY has determined that traffic in Mexico City averages seven miles per hour. As most Mexicans drive faster and more aggressively than New York cabbies, accelerating to high speed every time 100 yards of space opens in front of them, the collective time spent idling and motionless is incalculable. Much of that time is devoted to horn-blowing and the shouting of insults, pastimes that have long since replaced bullfighting as municipal favorites. Mexico City has more than three traffic fatalities every day of the year, and is acquiring automobiles at the rate of 20,000 each month. It is, in short, a modern metropolis, with all of the outrages and lunacies thereunto pertaining, a demographic and theoretical impossibility that somehow lumbers onward, and is, if you are in banking, medicine, government, law, academia, or publishing—any of the dignified or lucrative middle- and upper-middle-class trades—the only place in Mexico to live. With enough money in Mexico City you can buy anything at all.

Anything, that is, except peace of mind. Mexican homes have walls around them, a custom that came to the country from the Moors. Inside their sanctuaries, Mexicans of means can create the order and beauty that all but the most ceremonial of public places lack. But the walls have been breached by disquiet. There was great and immediate fear of a coup or a popular uprising here last autumn just before Luis Echeverría gave up the Presidency, the most serious worry since the student problems of 1968, when Gen. Hernández Toledo had helped the government demonstrate just how far it was willing to go to suppress dissent. Mexicans are accustomed to a level of civil violence that would be considered open warfare in many countries—five students and thirty-nine peasants were shot to death by the police in three separate and unrelated incidents in Oaxaca within a week of my leaving there, without causing more than a ripple in the press—but the assault at the National University alienated and intimidated a large sector of the professional and middle classes who had assumed *their* children immune. As In-

**"Inside their sanctuaries, Mexicans of means can create the order and beauty that all but the most ceremonial of public places lack. But the walls have been breached by disquiet."**



Gene Lyons  
INSIDE THE  
VOLCANO

terior Secretary, Luís Echeverría had been directly responsible for that event; after his "Third World" pronouncements he was suspected of megalomania, and a great many people feared that he would find or create a pretext for not giving up his office.

The curious form of democratic dictatorship that Mexico has evolved results in a cult of the Presidency that transcends our own. Even more than Americans, Mexicans are attracted to the mass delusion that their chief of state has direct control over the nation's affairs, and that whatever happens, for good or ill, is primarily his doing. It is true that during his term the President has extraordinary power—the efficient machinery of the PRI is organized to give him exactly what he asks for. Mexican Presidents are for all practical purposes simply appointed by their predecessors. The congress, labor unions, and *campesino* and landowner organizations are subdivisions of the party, and outside of the PRI there is no real politics at all. While there is considerable ideological diversity inside the bureaucracy, a party member who wishes to keep both front feet in the feeding trough

does as his leadership requires. It is a commonplace, and quite expected, that the President leaves office as one of Mexico's wealthiest men.

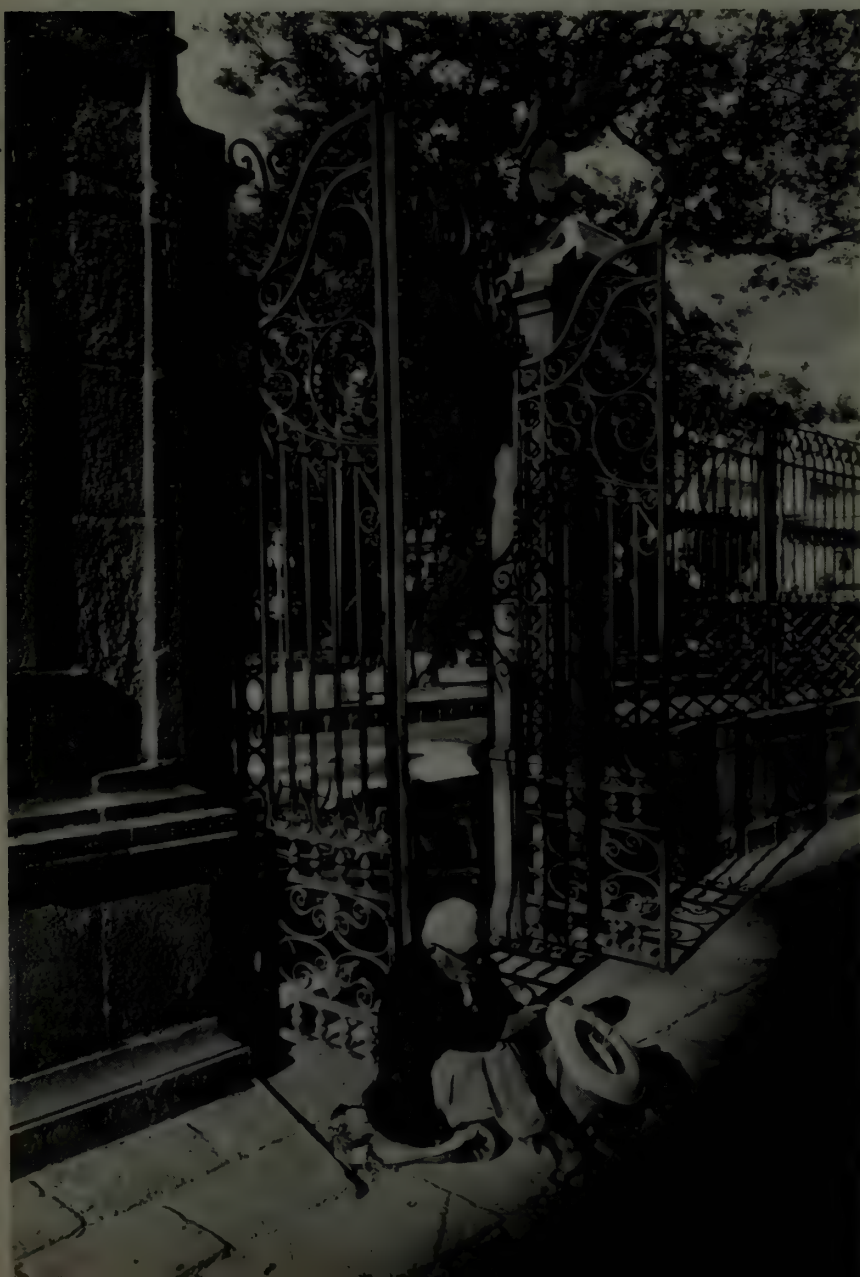
What bourgeois Mexicans have sold publicly they buy back in private irony. In a week in Mexico City, as elsewhere in the country, I rarely heard the government spoken of as anything but a vehicle of self-interest or a large-scale conspiracy to enrich the individuals who run it. A Mexican executive for Volkswagen told me quite frankly that he hoped to make and salt away as much cash as he could before the political collapse that he considered inevitable. Under López-Portillo he anticipated that things would be better soon—for business. Otherwise he thought perhaps Echeverría had the right idea: "We mortgage the country to American banks and then default. Then you take us over. That will be the only solution for Mexico." An American textbook publisher's representative who had been educated in Michigan said that his friends and relatives in the government maligned the new administration for bad theater: "They can't even come up with original scripts. If Carter is for austerity, then so is López-Portillo. When he visited the States, they put it out that he took just six aides and one small piano. Well, he took a 727 full of flunkies and a separate plane just for his wife's luggage, and I know because my uncle saw the flight plans." It is like that. Everyone has an inside story, and all the inside stories add up the same way. Nothing is as it seems, and the graft is always worse than you think. "You want to know what Mexico is about?" the same man said. "It's 'Fuck you, Jack, I've got mine.' That's the national motto." Asked why he chose to stay he shrugged. "People in the States work too hard. Here if I don't want to come in some morning I just blow it off. Nobody cares."

Mexico makes anguished fatalists out of its most earnest citizens, victims out of the vast majority, and opportunists out of the others.

The fundamental lie, Octavio Paz says in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, consists in the superimposition of liberal and democratic political ideals upon an economic order that has for the most part remained autocratic, even after the revolution of 1910-17, which had no ideology in the sense we understand it but which seems to have succeeded in the long run mainly in superimposing one landlord class on top of another. As Paz puts it,

*Liberal, democratic ideology, far from expressing our concrete historical situation, disguised it, and the political lie established itself constitutionally. The moral damage it has caused is incalculable; it has affected*

Jerry Sarapochiello





*profound areas of our existence. We move about in this lie with complete naturalness. For over a hundred years we have suffered from regimes that have been at the service of feudal oligarchies but have utilized the language of freedom. . . . Also, the founding of Mexico on a general notion of man, rather than on the actual situation of our people, sacrificed reality to words and delivered us up to the ravenous appetites of the strong.*

When people in Mexico mention the strong they usually mean the United States, the holder of patents and bank notes, the merchant of manufactured needs, the exporter of technology and overseer of "favorable climates for business." American corporations who bribe governments in Western Europe and Japan are operating with what amounts to an open field here in the homeland of *la mordida*. Lockheed, General Tire, and several other companies admitted as much in recent U.S. Senate hearings. Many Mexicans, however, assume that the American government will use what power it needs to in order to keep things that way, a suspicion reinforced by the recent news of CIA payments to former President Echeverría. During the boom years of the "Mexican miracle," enormous profits were taken out of the country, but very few taxes were paid and insistent pressure was used to discourage social innovations of any serious kind, as an example of which last year's letter to President Ford from seventy-eight U.S. Congressmen announcing that Mexico was tottering into the thrust of Communism was perhaps only the most ludicrous example. PRI will bring in Communism, I predict, within five years after Texas does.

Corruption itself is not surprising in a developing economy and not necessarily, from the instrumental point of view, very much of a problem so long as bribes are in one way or another reinvested in the economy. Unfortunately, the wealth tends to leave the country in legal or illegal external investments or find its way directly back to the givers of the bribe in the purchase of important luxury goods. In the words of Samuel del Villar, a Harvard-educated political scientist at the Colegio de Mexico, the country's leading graduate institution, "the American attitude is that of the economically rational man: if these people are willing to be shafted, I will shaft them. If I can bribe or force or manipulate them to my advantage, I will. Since we in the United States have a stronger culture, we will shaft them. Now you might do that in Colombia without effect to yourselves. But if you do it in Mexico there will be feedback eventually. Cultural cataclysms do not happen in a moment, so

there is danger you will not notice. But your influence is destroying our culture and in the long run may destroy us politically."

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### Excesses and lies

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**O**N MY LAST MORNING in Mexico I went to visit Julio Scherer García, the editor and publisher of *Proceso*. Scherer García had been recommended to me by several persons, Mexican and American, as a particularly eloquent interpreter of his country's dilemma. "Mexico," he said, "is a country that has lost all of its imaginable options because its institutions do not function. We have a saying: in hours the country has lied to itself about years, and in years it has lied to itself about centuries. In this manner we have ended up with the forms of institutions, rather than with the reality. Our congress is not a congress, the unions are not unions, and the newspapers are not newspapers. Form everywhere masquerades as substance. A country like this is almost impossible to organize and it cannot be efficient. Furthermore, in such conditions it is almost impossible to be just."

Scherer García paced the floor of his small office and gestured emotionally as he spoke. As with most Mexicans, it seemed he could speak of his country only with passionate affection or bitterness, having lost touch with the intervening moods.

"Imagine the following circumstances: one day in the Valley of Mexico all of the citizens of the country come together, the rich, the poor, the young and old, the sick and well, the sane and the mad, the blind, the deaf, the workers and the *campesinos*, the bankers, the policemen, and the crooks. All, all, all. All Mexicans together. We join at the *Zócalo* in front of the National Palace and we ask the President to resign. He says that he will deliberate and return in eight days to give us his answer. In eight days he returns and tells us that, yes, he has decided to resign. We cheer and celebrate. All of Mexico has a great fiesta. Then in a few more days we realize that we have no options and no ideas, and we have to go to the *Zócalo* once more and ask him to be President again.

"I have no idea what will happen. There will be violence; in Mexico there will always be violence. But it would be sterile violence—simple anarchy, because nobody knows what we can do. And in Mexico millions are desperate for food and work." The buzzard may say it was inevitable, but if the Mexican volcano does go off everyone on both sides of the border will hear it.

**"Mexico makes anguished fatalists out of its most earnest citizens, victims out of the vast majority, and opportunists out of the others."**

HARPER'S  
JUNE 1977



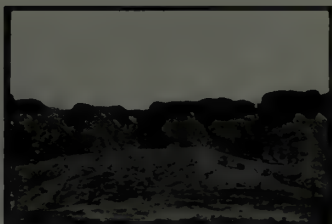
# VERSE

by Loren Eiseley

## THE BUZZARDS

The air on a hot day came up out of the dark chasm, cool  
as the wind off the ice front that had left  
a stream in the canyon pines on the cliffside. It took me  
a good while to learn

I could always find buzzards there  
wheeling on the rising draft with that grace  
that belied their occupation, till they  
were flecks in the sky. I only found them once  
on the ground above the chasm, mysterious, silent,  
like an undertakers' convention without a cadaver  
unless it was I they were measuring but did not want  
to be obvious behind such clairvoyant vision, so they turned and huddled,  
thirty perhaps, but it struck me, though big as turkeys,  
they were not frightened. I could be dealt with  
all in good time like ground things, and they continued  
their deliberations ignoring me; I am not a stick-throwing person.  
It left me with a fey sense of time disorganized, the ice just gone  
a trifle of ten thousand years, the pines intermediate, the buzzards—  
who knows when a buzzard comes except on updrafts, and I  
parked below on the roadside. The world is a jumble really  
and I a man  
quite recent, trying to remember the ice-caves we huddled under  
worshipping a mother carved in mammoth ivory, not knowing  
the way we had come, but feeling always the clairvoyant eyes  
of the buzzards  
still following our trail across immeasurable tundras.



## MARS

Two hundred million miles and instructions are  
given,  
the light at morning  
is photographed in pink and wafted  
to a room on earth, the desert is rust-red,  
the stones lie  
as our stones, the water courses are dry,  
the temperatures  
fall in the freezing nights, rise in the blazing day.  
A planet  
without men, without leaves,  
a pitiless loneliness  
where only a space probe  
turns a merciless  
mechanic eye on the horizon.

How little room in the universe  
is accorded life. For every yearning there is  
an abandoned rivulet, for every sorrow  
a drifting dust veil, and, worst of all, for loneliness  
not even  
evidence of an abandoned well. The sand lifts and blows  
and has, for a billion years,  
never known sentience, nor a voice crying  
to another voice. No eye till this moment  
has seen color in this world. It is now transmitted elsewhere.  
Here is the void where tears  
by no means known to man can fall, and yet  
two hundred million  
miles away they fall for those unborn, unused, reactivated  
by the unrolling film that prints  
light where no eye exists.



## DREAMED IN A DARK MILLENNIUM

Dreamed in a dark millennium I did not live  
in human time, but rather was a crawling landscape of eons,  
boulders gouged out, great canyons scarred my face,  
mesas of thought were heaped on me by winds,  
and all that time amidst light, darkness, desert rains,  
I lived and dreamed some planetary dream,  
myself, old earth-father, had devised, indifferent to life  
stiff-jointed mostly, in the gully fans and washes.

Who's to care what troubles a continental face?  
Ice, saber teeth, or mammoth tusks, they melt or drop  
and are forgotten while the face lives on, primordial,  
cross-hatched, seamed in distorted strata, but somehow young  
and smiling still

about some work, some dream. Great God  
who'd wish in a single night to penetrate  
the mighty caverns of the intellect and find  
such ruin prized there, but such building too,  
stone laid on stone to heave a mountain up and then to place  
some yellow-eyed and cloudy-coated leopard  
high on the cliffs to rule amidst the blizzards.

Beauty then  
out of the stones and slashes, and, just at the edge of morning,  
light.

Stretched in my bed, my giant continental bed, I sighed,  
having glimpsed man, some way within myself, and wept,  
wept for what it was he strove, for what he lost, could not attain, wept  
in the cold morning, joyed again to live, in the half-light  
before the daylight came.



John Diele

## THE SHORE HAUNTERS

Here in this dry, rocky, fired-out place  
one can still see the subsiding shorelines of a giant lake;  
one can still see

where the blue mountain glaciers fed it,  
where mammoth grazed,  
and now all

is stone and gravel, a Martian landscape  
with a few bits of flaked obsidian  
high on the bitter shores.

The world changes, that is the lesson, but no one  
lives long enough to remember, either man  
or beast, and the archaeologist

is an anomaly here. The bones of the elephant,  
the sandals in the cave by the high lake shore,  
speak to no one in particular.

Later, by this great dam  
in the Poconos

I see the motorboats and think  
we will always be here, that the pinewoods should shrink  
is unthinkable, but so was this unthinkable  
to the shore hunters—beasts or men—nevertheless  
it happened, the vanishing ice and the fire

like the heart's final  
contracting country, blackened cinders, dry beaches,  
the unimaginable place.



# ZEPHYR

A story by Patricia Duncan

THE LADIES' NOSES were painted with one quick stroke, a slash, a brown line. And those noses were vital. For although they never looked much like real ones, they were the closest I'd been. If the brush was too wet and the color ran, if the curve began too soon, I threw the page away. For they were to be noses, not scars; noses, not misplaced ponytails.

That evening I made my slash and my moment of intensity was gone.

Putting aside the paints, I withdrew further into the raveling wicker chair. It was here, in the garden daily at dusk, that I spread my feet among the phlox, weeds, and periwinkles to feel ashamed.

I heard her now, banging about the pots in the kitchen as she explained to the cat, Montgomery, why he could have no more milk today. I knew that Zephyr did not mind scrubbing macaroni from a pot while I hurried outside after dinner with my paints. In fact, Zephyr offered to do it; she handed me the watercolors and said: "You don't feel so hot, mama?" No, it wasn't feeling that my daughter resented taking over duties normally left to mothers that made me feel so guilty. Actually, Zephyr thought it great fun to collect rent from the roomers, telling them how to operate the air conditioners as she carefully printed their receipts. And it wasn't that Zephyr was the one who ran off for the plunger when the toilet was plugged up or that she held the raisin bread to the light to see if it was molding when she thought it should be. No, it was none of that.

It was the fact that the girl was ten years old and painted artificial eyes soaking in glass teacups and unicorns wearing sandals while I continued to paint the same ladies I had done for twenty years. It was the fact that Zephyr could amuse herself indefinitely with a magnet and a tiny metal Chevrolet, alone.

It was, after all, the fact that Zephyr raised herself which caused me to dribble colors on typing paper each evening. And it was a look a woman had given me in a grocery store that morning that made me feel especially disgusting as I wiggled my brush in the violet. Zephyr had been asking the stock boy where the cat food was. "The *dry* cat food," she had emphasized, "the mackerel and salmon actually," as I stood behind the cart gazing at my cuticles. The woman, who came speeding toward me from the detergent aisle, had shot me a glare clearly asking: "Why can't *you* do it?" And so I had rather meekly approached Zephyr and self-consciously taken her hand.

I sat staring now at my nails with their chipped polish and thought how easy it was to paint Zephyr's, who was, by the way, partial to an obnoxious orchid shade. I would dip the brush once and touch each little nail, making only a slight squiggle, and then she would do mine, biting her lower lip in concentration. At that moment, Zephyr came out with our Japanese roomer.

"Mama, Schozo's going to stay another month," she said, smiling and patting his hand. She seemed fragile as a fawn beside him, a cat's whisker, a shimmering chandelier prism. She had recently cut her own dark bangs and not done such a bad job, except that they dipped in the center in a vaguely vampish way.

"You are?" I said as Schozo bent his huge torso forward in a bow. "Well, we're happy to have you. Is there anything you need?" He cocked his head uncertainly; Zephyr cleared her throat and faced him.

"Do you need towels?" she said slowly, making a rectangle in the air.

"Towel? Oh, no, have three," he answered. "Have everything."

"What are you painting, mama?" Zephyr looked at the paper with that same gentle



curiosity she always had, a curiosity I was sure had to be pretended, and I reacted with the same guilty shrug.

"Oh, you know, another lady."

"What's this one's name?" she asked quickly, for that was the only use for the pictures, in choosing of names.

"Hmm, well, I thought she would be... Mildred."

"Mildred!" Zephyr laughed. "Mildred! How about Mildew?" And she chuckled and hopped about with her joke.

"Mildew, okay, I guess that might fit her with that dingy gray dress." Zephyr took the brush and painted "MILDEW" in black, making spider webs droop from each letter. Schozo laughed, too, nodding and pointing at the picture.

"She make bugs by lady's head," he said.

"Schozo's going to be on TV again Saturday," Zephyr said. "I told him we'd watch."

Schozo approached me, motioning for me to look at his little finger. "In ring," he said, making a circle, "jump on finger." He stomped a few times. "Hurt finger."

I told him I was sorry, but it was an occupational hazard, a rather minor one, and he could expect such things. None of which he

understood. So I asked him if some ice might help.

"Ice, yes, later."

"You don't have to wrestle tonight?" He shook his head. "I was thinking of some wine. Would you care for a glass?" He leaned forward in confusion and looked at Zephyr.

"Wine," she said. "It's kind of like beer."

"Beer? Oh, yes, thank you."

"No, wine, it's—"

"I'll just get some," I said, starting to rise. But Zephyr was already on her way to the kitchen.

Schozo sat and fondled his finger. I felt his uneasiness in Zephyr's absence and knew, with a private little pain, that my daughter communicated with him better than I, that her eagerness and efficiency smoothed the edges. For children can be better than adults with foreigners, the acquisition of language having not yet completely left their memories.

W

E SAT SILENTLY as the light dimmed and a stray breeze knocked about the garden's petals, pistils, and stamens, and I wondered how Schozo could be so gentle by





day when at night, wearing a black mask and greased with sweat, he beat people up for a living. "But I've heard that the fights aren't for real," Zephyr had told me. And she would know.

"It is too hot," Schozo said, wiping his chin.

"Yes," I answered, although I hadn't noticed, not even in the silk robe I wore that was tangled in the vines and soil. Zephyr came out with a tray, a bottle of Chablis, and three wineglasses, hers filled with Hawaiian Punch. She handed a glass to Schozo, who in his thirst downed it before I had tasted mine.

"Where is father?" he suddenly blurted. I instinctively threw Zephyr a somewhat panicked glance.

"Gone," was her reply between pursed-lipped sips of punch.

"Ah," he breathed, swabbing his forehead with his shirt sleeve.

"Are you ever hurt badly in your work?" Zephyr asked him, doing a rather beautiful job of subject changing, as she mustered up a look of extreme interest which obviously flattered him. Yes, a much better job than I could have done, for I had urgently snatched up the hem of my dress to pointlessly inspect the stitching.

"Hurt bad? Oh, no, but one time. One time cut head pretty bad."

"I don't see a scar," Zephyr said, going forward to examine his forehead. "Well, just a little one." With a sigh, Zephyr picked up her glass and said she was going inside to do some chores, meaning she might brush the cat, check on the pregnant guppy, or wash her hair. "Call me if you need me," she shouted as she closed the door, and I wondered when she would tire of looking after mother.

"Most people would never worry about the well-being of such a child," I said suddenly. I immediately retreated into my chair, hoping Schozo would ignore the remark, one I thought terribly foolish. I tried never to discuss my worrying about Zephyr, my own lethargy, or, more important, my ten-year-old astonishment over being someone's mother. I poured us more wine.

"You worry about your little girl?"

"Oh, a little," I said with a casual shrug that came off more phonily than I had hoped.

"She sick?"

"No, she's very healthy."

"She is happy little girl."

"You think so?" I asked quickly.

"Why worry?"

"Well, I do," I murmured, and a new wave

of it filled me. There were days when I spent hours agonizing over the name I had given her. You can take chances when you name a pet or a racehorse or a boat; you can be as bizarre as you like. But not with your own child. Zephyr and I often laughed about the names we christened my watercolored ladies and I wondered if my daughter had been named, say, Jane, would we laugh at Zephyr? But there had been a reason for it, a good one at the time.

"Do you think she has a strange name? Weird name? Bad name?"

"No, very pretty."

But then, to a Japanese, Mary would be as odd as Zephyr, wouldn't it?

"Well, her father was a meteorologist." Schozo grinned and nodded which meant he did not understand. "A weatherman... on television like you, says if it will rain, talks about weather."

"Oh, yes," he said loudly with a long nod meaning he got it.

"Or if there will be a west wind, westerly wind, or a soft breeze. And, well, she wasn't a common thing and couldn't have a common name and that was all of him she would have you know?"

Schozo nodded and grinned. I gave us each another dollop of wine.

"I see him on television?"

"Not here."

"He on trip?"

"I don't know where he is. She doesn't really mind not having him, I don't think. But then I don't know what she does mind. A few things, she hates liver, wool blankets, and cards. She likes board games with dice and fake money and all that. She likes winter more than summer; she was born in February, and that might have something to do with it... I saw that Schozo was leaning forward with that look I'd seen on faces in the language lab when people were frantically thinking. Can't you slow these damn tapes down, or do those people always gab like that?"

"You not married to man on television now?"

"We were never married."

"Not married?" he asked loudly with a very long nod.

"We didn't know each other very well about three weeks. In another city. And he knows nothing of Zephyr, but I've told her a much about him as I remember." I was rambling, but it was okay because of the wine and the translation problem. And he could barely see me in the near-dark, although





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caught his face quite clearly in some street light or another, even his scar.

"I worry because it's been ten years and I still have to convince myself that I have this child. I had trouble bearing the responsibility of a cat before her, wondering if it had worms or needed a rabies booster. But a cat meows when it needs something, and Zephyr just gets it for herself. This makes no sense, does it?"

"Father not know he have Zephyr?" he asked, worrying a little himself now.

"No. I didn't know about her myself for quite a while, being just as sort of irresponsible then as now. Only when she let me know that coffee and cigarettes were against her principles about, I guess, three months along."

"You not get lonely sometime?"

"I have some friends." And that was another thing. Perhaps it was going a bit too far when Zephyr welcomed the few stray males who stayed the night. If there was anything she resented about them, it was not their hours in my room, but their premeditated smiling, their offering to play jacks with her. She did not like jacks and let them know by hauling out Monopoly, which they hated because that meant a good two hours.


"Why you never tell father?" Schozo asked, helping himself to the wine. I was annoyed suddenly with his preoccupation with the father. That was eleven years ago; he had merely been there. He had, like the rest of them, sperm and the habit of leaving the toilet seat up. While pointing at the temperatures in Tucson and Phoenix, his teeth and shirt looked white and well cared for; he read mysteries and had a fetish for lettuce-and-mustard sandwiches. I did not recall him looking anything like Zephyr. That was all I remembered, I couldn't help it, that was all there was.

"It's not as though it's such an original case," I told him. "Maybe another woman would have gone back after him, I don't know. But it's more than the fact that she's fatherless; I don't want her to be motherless, too. She'll never have anything to remember about her father and what's to make her *want* to remember how I sat around painting ladies and being childish while she was always so grown-up?"

I could tell that by now Schozo had wearied of translating, that he wanted to walk the wooden, blue-lanterned corridor to his room. Most likely he would look at his mail with its beautiful Japanese stamps, full of lacy moths and delicate networked trees, all in indigo and rose, before he lay down with snatches of odd American sounds.

"Good luck with the wrestling tomorrow," I told him. "I hope you win."

"Oh, I win. Tomorrow Tuesday, they tell me I win," he answered, bowing.

 ZEPHYR WAS cutting pictures from *National Geographic* in her bedroom, filing them meticulously in a long cardboard box.

"Hi, I put some ice in Schozo's room for his finger," she mumbled, scissoring carefully along a page and then bending over the box.

I flopped into one of her beanbag chairs. "Why are you filing that alligator under C? Oh, I guess it's a crocodile."

"No, it's a caiman, a kind of alligator in South America."

I seemed to wither into the chair and, sighing, could not remember outsmarting my own mother very often, surely not at ten. Look, it's bad enough to be put down by your peers: by a woman in the supermarket, hairnetted and hurrying, by even the Avon lady last week who told me that the lipstick I stared at was not pink, as I thought, but Champagne Pink Frosté instead.

"I suppose," I said quietly as I flipped through the *Us*: Urals, Uxmal, Uzbek, "I suppose you don't think I'm very bright."

"Well, most people would think it was an alligator, mama. It is an alligator, just a special kind."

"But you knew it was a caiman."

"I just read that it was right here. See?" She flashed the magazine at me and removed it before I saw anything.

"Does it ever bother you that you know all these things and I don't?"

"Maybe if you read more—"

"I don't need you to tell me to read!" I snapped.

"Sorry," Zephyr said, studiously involved with *Ks*. She put a pencil behind her ear and sat tapping her foot in concentration. I was amazed, as usual, at her ability to fall so easily into seriousness, to ignore distraction, to be, somehow, important in everything she did. And to ignore me at that moment was something, for I was shamefully greedy for her attention; I hummed and sighed, I uncapped her perfumes, I switched on the aquarium light and startled the neon tetras.

"I do read, but there are other things that I have to do."

"What do you have to do?" she asked.

"What's that remark?" I said fairly insolently.

"I asked you what you had to do," Zephyr repeated, flipping through the magazine and stroking her chin pompously.

"So why aren't you a professor?" I asked



er, extremely annoyed. I lit a cigarette, although she forbade them in her room.

"I'd have to go to college first," she replied, looking up for the first time. "And if you're going to smoke, would you please get an ash-tray? I don't want my room to burn down."

"I can take care of my own ashes." We'd been through the cigarette debate before; last week she'd brought home a package of little filter gadgets that you attach to the end of the cigarette. "It's supposed to filter out 89.2 percent of the tar and nicotine on your brand," she had told me. And I obediently used them. "Do you know what your lungs must look like by now?" she asked me. "Here, let me show you," and she hopped off the bed in search of some book.

"I know, black and hideous. Quit being such a know-it-all."

"Here," she said, coming at me with a picture of a horrible exposed lung.

"Would you get it away from me?" I shouted. "Now knock it off, Zephyr. Just sit down and cut out your pictures like a normal kid."

"Okay," she answered indifferently, jumping back on the bed.

Why didn't Zephyr ever get really angry, I wanted to know. And why was I so worried about her? After all, she was actually a goddess; she could have gone around letting air out of people's tires, spilling nail polish on carpets, or swearing. She could have been like the children I had babysat for long ago, the ones I had given fifty cents to go to bed, the ones who had inspired me to invent games in which the rules were: "Let's pretend we're deaf-mutes so we can see how good we have it now."

"You know, Zephyr, that sometimes you sort of, well, make me feel inferior."

"Inferior? How come?"

"Maybe I don't mean inferior. Maybe I mean that I'm just not much help to you."

Zephyr did not reply to this; she was thinking about it, very carefully, winding her hair around a finger, biting her lower lip.

"I admit I haven't been the most *normal* mother."

To this, Zephyr tilted her head and squinted at me.

"I actually hadn't planned to be a mother, you know," I told her. "You were sort of a surprise package."

"A good surprise?"

"Zephyr, what do you really think about me?" I decided to ask before answering her; for it was something I now needed to know, something I wanted out of her, quickly, and to the point.

"What, mama? Well, I think you're pretty,"

and she came forward to take a handful of my hair.

"No, come on, what do you think?"

"You're a lot better than *he* is, my father," she said shortly, wrinkling her nose and returning to the bed.

"You don't know him."

"He doesn't care about me."

"He doesn't *know* about you. I had to."

"Aren't you glad you know about me?" And there was some sort of look in her eyes I didn't recognize, that had never been there, an odd little stare which deepened the blue. It was not a pleasant look. It might even have been a frightened look or, in Zephyr, something as rare.

"Of course I'm glad."

Zephyr sat still a moment more, then loosened partially. She then began something quite uncharacteristic; she fidgeted. She picked at the bedspread, scratched her ear, cleared her throat.

"I just don't think you need me, that's all," I said. And there it was, out finally.

"But . . . but what would I do if—"

"You're wondering where you would live? You'd have your choice; anybody would want you."

"I know, but . . . things might not be the same," she said softly. And now she was obviously unsettled. I was startled at my cruelty, for I had her sitting as straight as a victim of charm school; I had her swallowing and blinking, and she was pressing her little orchid nails into her knees. And yet there was a satisfaction in this as well, a twinge of perverse pride that I was now the one delivering a bit of uneasiness.

"You think those ladies I paint are stupid, don't you?" I asked belligerently. "Really stupid."

"Stupid? No, mama, I—I like them."

"Oh, come on! They're all the same. You do better yourself. Now be honest with me."

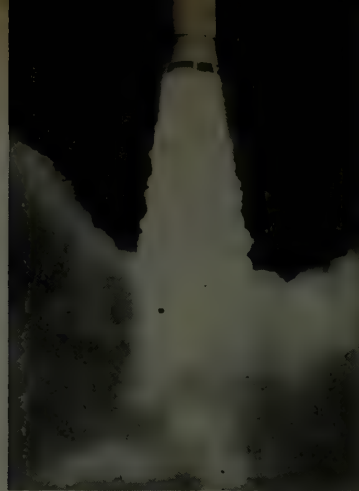
Zephyr suddenly widened her eyes and pushed back her bangs. In a very smooth tone, she said: "I *am* being honest."

She might mean that, I thought. And bending closer to my daughter who had, above all, a need for truth, who had been told nothing but that all her life, who at ten wanted no fakery about the facts of her father and faced, rather gallantly, the phobias of her mother, I saw that she did mean it.

We settled to stare at each other, eyes blue to blue, huddled in Zephyr's room of tropical fish and dictionaries and exotic snapshots. Her hand came to my face, and with her thumb she traced my nose, just once, a slash, a very even line.

"I seemed to wither into the chair and, sighing, could not remember outsmarting my own mother very often, surely not at ten."





# THE ARMS ZEALOTS

**Arms Coalition**  
A group called the Committee on the Present Danger constituted itself last year to

awaken us to the "present danger." The names of its 141 founding board members provide a good cross section of the personalities and interests in the AC (as well as a couple of surprises)—Saul

Bellow, William Colby, John Connally, Lane Kirkland (secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO), Clare

Boothe Luce, Norman Podhoretz (editor of *Commentary*), David Packard (head of Hewlett-Packard), Gen.

Matthew Ridgway (Ret.), Eugene Rostow, Dean Rusk, Gen. Maxwell Taylor (Ret.), Edward Teller, Adm. Elmo Zumwalt (Ret.). The chairman of its policy studies is

Paul Nitze, who has been involved in almost every major effort to jump up the defense budget since 1949. The

committee has consciously modeled itself on groups of distinguished laity that campaigned before

World War II for preparedness and, after, for the Marshall Plan. It describes the "present danger" as follows: "The principal

threat to our nation, to world peace, and the cause of human freedom is the Soviet

drive for dominance based upon an unparalleled military buildup."

Those who would expand "defense capability" are prepared to sell America short  
by Daniel Yergin

**A**S HAS BECOME customary when an old administration departs and a new one marches in, we are in the midst of a loud and passionate debate about arms. Some of the relevant questions have become familiar over more than three decades of such debates. Are the Russians getting ahead of us? Are they actively seeking world domination? Should we spend more money on arms? Should we rush headlong into new military technologies? Some of the questions are more recent, the result of nuclear parity between the two superpowers and halting steps toward arms control. Is there or is there not a new Soviet military buildup? Is real and secure arms limitation possible with the Russians? Or are they taking advantage of such agreements to achieve nuclear superiority? While the debate is easily fogged in by the special codes used by those who talk about arms (MX, MIRV, PGM) the issues are clear—budgets, jobs, prestige, weapons systems, the structure of Soviet-American relations, the next spiral in the arms race, and that most basic of all matters—survival.

The argument in Washington and throughout the nation is between two "parties." On one side is the arms lobby or what might be called the arms coalition (hereafter to be abbreviated as the AC). Its members are those people, both inside the government (particularly in the Defense Department and the Congress) and outside, who believe that the Soviet Union is an ever-expanding menace. They believe that we are still living in the Cold War, a confrontation emanating from, as they see it, the predatory character of the Soviet Union.

On the other side is the arms-control lobby. Its members believe that the common interest

between the Soviet Union and the United States in avoiding conflict, particularly nuclear war, outweighs their differences, and makes arms control not only possible but necessary.

It seems clear to me that these days the public argument is going in favor of the AC. The Carter Administration has already found itself hampered in its efforts to work out further proposals for the strategic-arms-limitation talks. Before negotiating with the Russians it must negotiate with the AC, and that does not leave much room for flexibility. Meanwhile, the propaganda campaign of the AC is growing. For instance, an organization called the American Security Council has produced a film dwelling on Soviet strength, *The Price of Peace and Freedom*, which has been on television stations around the country 225 times. Another 1,250 prints have been dispatched throughout the land. The Emergency Coalition Against Unilateral Disarmament got forty Senators to vote against Carter's nomination of Paul Warnke for arms-control negotiator.

At the same time, various versions of intelligence reports, meant to strike fear into the national heart, regularly find their way into the press. Generals retire from active duty to carry their message to a wider public. The Central Intelligence Agency, usually thought to be beset by critics from the Left, is one of the agencies that does not have a direct vested interest in an expanding defense budget, and its analyses of Soviet strength have, until recently, been the most balanced. But the CIA has been subjected to a powerful assault from the Right, in the course of which it has virtually been charged with purveying Soviet propaganda.



**W**HAT MOTIVATES the AC? One could be rather cynical about the concerns of its members. "It is getting increasingly difficult to find anybody who isn't directly or indirectly connected with some weapons system," Senator Stuart Symington has complained. "You might say his meal ticket is involved in the future development of weaponry." It is correct to say that part of what is going on here involves not so much the defense of the United States as the defense of the defense budget.

Yet it would be dreadfully unfair to assign only cynical motives to the members of the AC, many of whom speak from deep conviction. Appalled by the character of the Soviet system, they fear that its empire will be extended even farther. They believe that the basic trends are running in the Russians' favor, and that if those trends are to be arrested, the United States must lay aside its guilt and recover its will and determination. For they are convinced that between the present world and the Communist world stands only the United States. They have come to agree among themselves that, in the words of one of their leaders, we are living in a "prewar," not "postwar" situation. They charge that we are trying to appease the U.S.S.R. and depend upon its goodwill, just as the Western world sought to do with Hitler, and that such a course is no less foolish today than it was in the 1930s.

Underlying their convictions is a basic feeling of unease. As we have gone on investing resources, so have the Russians, and the days of our overwhelming nuclear superiority are gone. Whether you call it nuclear parity or rough equivalence," and no matter how inescapable it is, many Americans are unaccustomed to thinking in this way, and do not like it. One can understand, even if one does not share in it, how the AC's view of the world is haunted by the specter of the "Soviet military buildup." Any reasonable person must be concerned about what capabilities the Soviets could have and might be tempted to use in a situation of "crisis instability"—that is, a tense eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation.

But so much in this debate depends upon interpretations of ambiguous information, on intuitions, and not on hard facts. Maybe the AC is right to be so alarmed, and if events bear it out we will have to eat crow and be grateful that some people were bold enough to choose the role of Churchill, and only hope the nation responds in time. We cannot ignore the point Dean Acheson made in 1940: "The judgment of nature upon error is death."

Certainly the AC is correct in its claim that the U.S.S.R. allocates a great deal of its re-

sources to its military establishment. Right across the board, from manpower to advanced missiles, it is enlarging and modernizing its forces. It is also true that the Soviet Union is a closed society. Most of its peoples know as little as we do about the Kremlin's plans, intentions, and military budgets. Indeed, it sometimes seems that Moscow wants to provide material for the "worst case" analyses in the West. The problem is, as the defense correspondent of the London *Observer* put it, "to highlight the omissions and distortions" of those who exaggerate Soviet military strength "without falling into the trap of seeming to pretend that the Soviet buildup is not there."

On the basis of what we know today, there are two big flaws in the arguments put forward by the members of the AC. First, they forget that the Soviet-American arms race is a dialectic, a process of interaction, with each side responding to the initiatives of the other and so carrying the whole process to new levels of destructive power. Factors other than conscious political goals shape the decisions on both sides. "Our present forces cannot be explained entirely by a close reading of statements by high officials on procurement objectives," a panel on "nuclear effects," composed of leading scientists and former Defense Department officials, reported recently to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "The forces actually purchased often represent the effects of overreactions to Soviet initiatives, institutional momentum, inter-service rivalries, or the 'manifest technology' of an emerging technology. It would be unrealistic to expect a great deal of consistency from this history." This is the history of Soviet decisions as well.

Second, the available evidence, as we shall see, simply does not make the AC case. It does, however, suggest that the AC may well be doing a disservice to American interests. By working so hard to drive up defense expenditures, it adds fuel to the arms race and can even forestall meaningful arms control at a crucial moment. This happened during the Ford Administration, and may well happen in the Carter Administration. The effect might be not to increase, but to decrease our security.

Of late, the AC has been telling us that what matters is not just the substance of our own and Soviet military power, but the worldwide perception of each. It is the members of the AC, however, who are shaping those perceptions now. Day after day they belittle our formidable military establishment, thereby announcing that we are no longer number one—when, manifestly, we are. They warn us of the danger of "Finlandization," but they promote a process of (Continued on page 70)

#### Arms Control

One of the more prominent, though not very active, arms-control-oriented groups is the American Committee on U.S.-Soviet Relations. Its leaders suggest a more narrow coalition—John Kenneth Galbraith, Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, Donald Kendall (chairman of Pepsico), George Kennan, the economist Wassily Leontief, Eugene McCarthy, Edwin O. Reischauer, Robert Roosa, Terry Sanford, Thomas Watson, Jr., Jerome Weisner (president of MIT), and Leonard Woodcock. There are several other small groups on the arms-control side, including a few university research projects and organizations such as the Arms Control Association, the Council on a Livable World, and the Federation of American Scientists. It must be said, however, that those in the AC are firmly convinced that most of Carter's appointments in the military and national-security areas come from the arms-control side of the fence.

*Daniel Yergin is the author of Shattered Peace, a new book about the Cold War and the national-security state. He is on the faculty of the Harvard Business School, and is a research fellow of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard.*



# ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY

by Tom Gervais

The CIA recently estimated that in the past few years the Soviet Union has spent \$40 billion in the development of fifteen new strategic weapons. That does not include Russia's regular costs for the procurement of tanks, aircraft, and other conventional items. The United States spends similar amounts and counts this year on allocating \$36 billion—about 40 percent—of its defense budget for weapons.

Add to that the amounts spent by these two powers on military aid, the costs of weapons they and other countries produce for the growing international arms trade, and the costs in other countries for rapidly expanding inventories of sophisticated weaponry of home manufacture. More than forty nations are currently engaged in the domestic production of arms.

A conservative estimate is that each year over \$200 billion is spent worldwide on weapons procurement—or more than \$500 million a day. The most expensive weapons programs in the United States are for the expansion or improvement of existing strategic weapons systems, or for the development of wholly new ones. Following is a list of the major weapons systems in America's strategic and tactical nuclear arsenal, together with the major improvement and development programs now in progress for strategic systems.



**General Dynamics FB-111A.** Seventy-six of these aircraft have been built, and sixty-eight are deployed in four bomber squadrons to make up the present balance of the SAC bomber force. With a ceiling of 60,000 feet and a range of 4,000 miles, the twin turbofan-engined bomber can reach speeds up to Mach 2.5. Since January 1976, these aircraft have been

modified to accept up to six SRAM missiles. Alternatively, they can carry six B-61 nuclear gravity bombs. Their highly sophisticated avionics system uses fourteen onboard computers, and by the end of this year they will have completed modification to the ALQ-137 automatic ECM system, affording exceptional protection against Soviet radar and missile defenses.



**Boeing B-52 Stratofortress.** Still the backbone of our Strategic Air Command, this eight-engine bomber was originally designed to carry four thermonuclear gravity bombs in internal weapons bays. From an operational strength of 640 aircraft in 1962, 349 B-52s now remain with the Strategic Air Command, having undergone a variety of improvements and modifications at a total cost of more than \$1.1 billion.

Eighty B-52Ds remain operational, organized into five bomber squadrons. Structural modifications, principally to the wings of the B-52D, have cost \$2.6 million per aircraft. Of 296 operational B-52Gs and B-52Hs, 151 B-52Gs and 90 B-52Hs are organized into seventeen bomber squadrons. Cartridge starters have been added to the Pratt & Whitney J57 turbojet engines on the B-52G, and Pratt & Whitney TF33 turbofan engines have replaced the J57 on the B-52H, at a cost of \$35 million. An electro-optical viewing system has been installed on all the B-52Gs and B-52Hs, at a cost

of \$1 million per aircraft. Phase 6 ECM (electronic countermeasures) suites have been added to all B-52Gs and B-52Hs, including ITT's ALQ-1 deception jammer, which counteracts Soviet pulse radars, at a total cost of \$296 million. Finally, all B-52Gs and B-52Hs have been fitted with SRAM (short-range attack missile) launchers and their associated equipment, at a cost, excluding the missiles themselves, of \$359 million.

The B-52D can carry four nuclear gravity bombs, either the B-28 or the B-61—the latter being the newest operational SAC hydrogen bomb, available in a variety of yields. The B-52 and B-52H can carry the above load, in addition to either six SRAM missiles or two AGM-28 Hound Dog missiles mounted on underwing pylons. Alternatively, they can replace nuclear gravity bombs in the weapons bays with additional SRAM launchers, for a maximum load of twenty SRAM missiles. The B-52 has a top speed of 6,600 mph (Mach .085) and a range of 10,000 miles.

**ABM (anti-ballistic-missile) Systems.** We have dismantled our Safeguard ABM complex at Grand Forks, North Dakota. The total cost of the program for the 100 Safeguard ABMs at this site was \$5.4 billion, or \$54 million for each ABM and its launching equipment. We have also deactivated the Nike-Hercules SAM (surface-to-air missile) system in the continental United States. Nike-Hercules SAMs remain operational, however, at all overseas sites, and the Nike-Hercules system is still under manufacture by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd., under license from Western Electric Company.

**Tactical Nuclear Forces.** In addition to those nuclear weapons we define as strategic, the United States has an additional 22,000 weapons classed as tactical because of their shorter range—even though a number of them are more powerful than the strategic weapons. About half of these tactical nuclear weapons are kept in domestic arsenals, and the rest are deployed around the world with American air, ground, and naval carrier forces, or with the forces of NATO and SEATO countries.

There are a total of 7,000 nuclear weapons in Europe, 1,700 in Asia, 1,500 with the United States Pacific Fleet, and 1,000 with the

Atlantic Fleet. Each aircraft carrier stores about 100 nuclear weapons in the form of nuclear air-to-surface bombs, including the B-43, B-57, B-61, and W-72, which have yields from five kilotons as much as one megaton. This same inventory of bombs is stored forward American air bases within easy reach of the Soviet Union and China. Our forward-based aircraft include 72 F-111Es in England, 244 F-4Cs and F-4Ds in England, Spain and Germany, 72 F-4Ds in Korea, 36 F-4Ds in Taiwan, 72 A-7s and 24 A-6s aboard two carriers in the Mediterranean, and 108 A-7s and 36 A-6s aboard three carriers in the Western Pacific. This is a total of 664 tactical aircraft capable of reaching targets within the Soviet Union and China. They have combat radii of 400 to 1,100 miles.

In addition to nuclear surface-to-air bombs, the GW Walleye Mk 1, a self-homing, television-guided, air-to-surface missile developed by the Naval Weapons Center, Martin Marietta, and Hughes Aircraft has been delivered in small quantities to forward-based aircraft in Europe and Asia, and to carriers in both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets. The Walleye is the first "smart bomb"—it doesn't miss its target. It has a range of thirty-five miles and a warhead yield of from five to ten kilotons, and can be carried by the F-4, F-111, A-4, A-



Rockwell International B-1. Powered by four General Electric JF100 turbofan engines, with a wingspan of 137 feet and a length of 143 feet (about two-thirds the size of the B-52), this aircraft incorporates the most sophisticated advances in science has achieved in avionics and countermeasures capabilities, including the APQ-144 forward-looking radar, and ECM equipment that reduces its infrared "signature" and radar cross section to improve penetration of enemy defenses. It is designed to fly under Soviet radar at treetop levels, traveling at speeds of up to Mach 1.6, and it has a range of 100 miles. It is also capable of carrying up to thirty-two SRAM missiles. The U.S. Air Force has proposed it as a replacement for the B-52, and plans to build a force of 244 B-1s. Three prototypes have been built and a fourth is under construction. The total program cost to completion



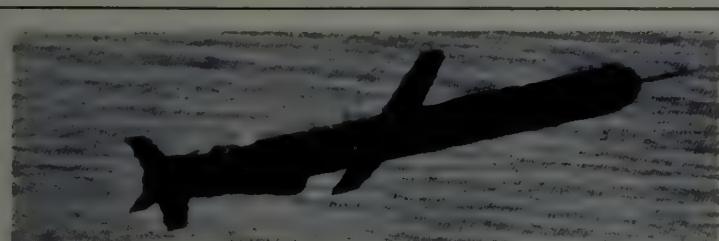
Wide World

is \$22.9 billion, or \$93.8 million for each aircraft. It has been estimated that cost overruns may bring the final cost per aircraft to \$100 million. The B-1 program is currently under review by the Carter Admin-

istration, which is expected to make a decision this month on whether to proceed. The production lines are open, and a spending limit of \$87 million per month has been set pending review.

#### AGM 69A SRAM.

Developed by Boeing Aerospace Company, the SRAM, or short-range attack missile, has a speed of Mach 3 and a range of from 25 to 100 miles. By August 1975 1,500 of the missiles had been produced. The cost of the SRAM program was \$567 million, or \$391,000 per missile, excluding the warhead. The Mark 12A reentry vehicle, a three-warhead MIRV (multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle) with a yield of 200 kilotons for each warhead, costs \$610,000. Therefore, the complete cost of one SRAM missile, with warhead, is \$1,001 million.



UPI

**BGM-109 Tomahawk (SLCM).** This is the Navy's submarine-launched cruise missile, developed by the Convair Division of General Dynamics. There is both a strategic version with a nuclear warhead yielding 200 kilotons and a tactical version with a conventional high-explosive warhead. The guidance is as

sophisticated as the Air Force ALCM, using inertial and TERCOM (terrain contour mapping) systems. The range of the tactical missile is 250 miles, while the strategic version, flying at subsonic speeds and very low altitude, reaches over 2,000 miles. The unit cost of the strategic Tomahawk is \$792,000.

#### AGM-28 Hound Dog.

Developed by Rockwell International, and supplied to twenty-nine SAC wings in August 1963, several hundred of these missiles remain operational. Two can be carried on each B-52G or B-52H. With a thermonuclear warhead, the missile travels at a speed of Mach 2, and has a range of more than 600 miles.



Wide World

#### AGM-68A Air-Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM).

This is the Air Force's cruise missile, developed by Boeing Aerospace Company. The B-52 could carry up to 12 of these, and the B-1 as many as 24. Powered by an air-breathing turbofan engine, and navigated by a combination of inertial guidance and preprogrammed terrain contour mapping, it is continuously corrected in its course by satellite data links, and can deliver a 170-kiloton warhead over a range of 1,200 miles to within ten yards of its target. The USAF has ordered 2,000 ALCMs. After development costs of \$1.5 billion, the total program has run to \$4 billion. Thus the cost of each ALCM, including development, is \$625,000. Subsequent production runs should reduce the unit ALCM cost to about \$500,000.

and A-7 aircraft. Some Walleyes with high explosive warheads have been sold to Israel.

Standard equipment with United States and NATO ground forces in Europe are the Lance, Pershing, Honest John, and Sergeant surface-to-surface battlefield support missile systems. Nuclear warheads for all of these systems are stocked in forward bases. The Honest John, with a range of 25 miles and a warhead yield of 100 kilotons, and the Sergeant, with a range of 85 miles and a similar kiloton yield, are now being phased out of service and replaced by the Lance, which has a range of 70 miles and a warhead yield of 50 kilotons. The Pershing, with a warhead yield of 400 kilotons and a range of 50 miles, is capable of reaching targets in the Soviet Union from its positions in Germany. Nuclear ordnance has also been stored in Europe and in Asia for the 155 mm and 203 mm howitzer, which is standard equipment in battalion and division artillery units of the United States, West German, and Korean armies. With a 1-kiloton yield, these shells have a range of about 10 miles.

The Navy's Atlantic and Pacific fleets, totaling 284 ships and submarines, carry an additional variety of tactical nuclear naval weapons, aside from those delivered by carrier-based attack aircraft. Standard

Navy equipment is the TALOS surface-to-air missile, with a warhead yield of five kilotons and a range of seventy miles, and the TERRIER surface-to-air missile, with a range of twenty-five miles and a warhead yield of one kiloton. These weapons are regarded as defense against air attack. Naval ASW (anti-submarine warfare) aircraft, such as the P-3, the S-3, and a variety of helicopters, also carry the Mark 57 and Mark 101 nuclear depth bombs, with yields of from five to ten kilotons.

Completing America's nuclear arsenal at sea are the ASROC and SUBROC missiles used, respectively, by cruisers and destroyers to hunt submarines, and by submarines to hunt other submarines. Both have warhead yields of one kiloton, but the ASROC has a range of six miles while the SUBROC, a very sophisticated weapon fired below the surface of the sea and traveling in the air before it reenters the water, has a range of thirty miles.

*Tom Gervasi, a former counterintelligence officer assigned to the Army Security Agency, is currently at work on a novel about the American intelligence community.*

*From Arsenal for Democracy: A Catalogue of American Weapons, by Tom Gervasi, to be published in October by Grove Press.*



Daniel Yergin  
THE ARMS  
ZEALOTS

(Continued from page 67) self-Finlandization. This hysteria tends to obscure the most disturbing aspects of Soviet behavior—in southern Africa, for example. It also distracts attention from matters that do require attention, such as the military balance in Europe.

Of course, we should not delude ourselves about the character, methods, and values of the Soviet system. We cannot depend on the “good-will” of the Soviets. But, for our own good, we should try to see matters as clearly, honestly, and unemotionally as possible.

George Kistiakowsky, professor emeritus of chemistry at Harvard, has been intimately involved with American defense posture for almost four decades. He played a key role in the atomic-bomb development, was science adviser to President Eisenhower, and has been involved in numerous expert capacities since.

“The leaking of sensitive foreign-intelligence information by professional superpatriots in and out of the government is not new,” he has written.

*In the early '50s the press was flooded with stories of a “bomber gap.” The result of the campaign was the buildup of B-47 and B-52 strategic bomber forces, although gradually it came out that the gap was a myth. In 1957, a major “top secret” study in the executive office of the President [the Gaither Report] reported to him that “evidence clearly indicates increasing threat” of the Soviet Union, which would “become critical by 1959 or the early 1960s” because the USSR would “acquire significant ICBM delivery capability with megaton warheads by 1959.” It urged increasing United States military budgets and a multibillion dollar civilian defense program to counter that of the Soviets. President Eisenhower took unkindly to most of these recommendations, and so the contents of this “Gaither” report were leaked out.*

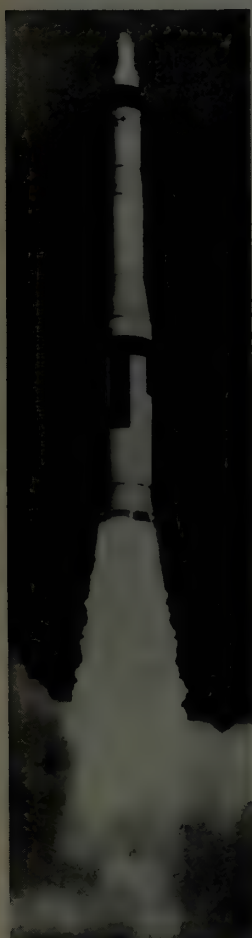
*Senator Kennedy used the “missile gap” in his 1960 campaign and in 1961 the strategic missiles program was greatly expanded, although the missile gap was turning out to be a myth. A couple of years later there was a flurry of stories about the massive Soviet civil defense program that almost resulted in Washington’s starting one. Still later stories appeared of a countrywide deployment of an anti-missile defense, nicknamed Tallinn, which would defeat American missiles and thus undermine the U.S. posture of secure deterrence. As some intelligence analysts asserted throughout, the Tallinn system was only for anti-aircraft defense; but in the meantime the U.S. MIRV program got going. The Soviets followed suit and the MIRVed missiles have now greatly increased the already excessive destructiveness of strategic forces on both sides.*

Behind all this is oversell, the game of National Security, which has been played for many years, and is being played now. To understand the game, we need to understand how it was set up, and that takes us back to the rise of America’s national-security state.

## The national-security state

**A**T CERTAIN MOMENTS, unfamiliar phrases suddenly become common articles of political discourse, and the concepts they represent become so embedded in the public mind that they seem always to have been with us. So it was with the phrase *national security* at the end of World War II. It became popular because it encapsulated an outlook on the world, a mentality that expressed the conventional wisdom of policy makers. The doctrine of national security described a changed relationship between the United States and the rest of the world and suggested policies to be followed in the light of this perception. There is a desire among Americans, when it comes to foreign policy, to find a single concept, a commanding idea that integrates contradictory information, suggests and rationalizes courses of action, and, as a court of last resort for both policy makers and public, almost magically puts an end to disputes and debates. “National security” has been the commanding idea of American foreign policy for more than three decades. The eventual result is the national-security state, a state within a state, a complex of attitudes, policies, government bureaucracies, and private organizations that serve and have a stake in a permanent and ever-expanding preparation for war. Of course, this must be balanced off against the grim and much more pervasive “total security state” of the Soviet Union.

Paradoxically, the growth of American power after World War II did not provide a greater sense of security, but instead a greater range of urgent threats. The military service felt under attack in another way—by the unification debate, which pitted the Navy against the Air Force, with each attempting to stake out a new role that would justify a large establishment in the postwar era. The unification battle was a classic case of bureaucratic bloodletting, a bitter half-decade struggle over the postwar organization and reduced budget of America’s military establishment. Throughout World War II, the Army and Navy were entirely separate, each represented by its own Secretary in the Cabinet, while the Air Force was a rebellious, semi-autonomous part of the Army. The idea behind unification was that



Wide World

**Minuteman II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (LGM-30F).** Developed by Boeing Aerospace Company, 450 of these missiles today equip SAC wings in Montana, Missouri, and Utah. Armed with the Avco Mark 11B single warhead, yielding two megatons, they have an eight-target selection capability and a range of over 7,000 miles.



the Air Force would gain its independence, thus creating three equal services, and that they would all be brought into one department, a Department of Defense. Those pushing unification (and the Navy was resolutely opposed) did so on grounds of efficiency.

In order to win bureaucratic victories, each service sought to define national security as broadly as possible. No one was more effective at this than James Forrestal, the brisk and energetic Wall Street bond salesman who had become Secretary of the Navy. "It has been a foolishness of mine that the question of national security is not merely a question of the Army and Navy," he said in the autumn of 1945. "We have to take into account our whole potential for war, our mines, industry, manpower, research, and all the activities that go into normal civilian life. I do not think you can deal with this only by the War and Navy Departments. This has to be a truly global effort.

"After all, somebody said war is merely an extension of policy," he added. "I do not know who said it."

The doctrine of national security could gain meaning and substance only in the presence of a palpable enemy. Forrestal pushed hard to cast the Soviet Union in this role. Russia was a convenient choice for another reason. After the second world war, the Soviet Union was the only power that could possibly challenge the United States militarily, and, having lived through Munich and its consequences, American leaders were much more inclined to go on the "worst assumption" and not take chances. The U.S.S.R. already had extended its brutal control to Eastern Europe. But one did not have to shut his eyes to the horrors of Stalinism to recognize that the Soviet Union was not capable of actually posing a military challenge to the United States. Russia did not even have a real navy, although Forrestal would never publicly so admit. Some U.S. planners recognized how weak the U.S.S.R. was at this time, but presenting it as a threat did offer a rationale for an expanded mission for the services. In this regard, the Soviet Union's new role in world politics was a blessing for all parties to the unification debate. The manipulation and exaggeration of Soviet "threats" has, ever since, been central to the game of national security.

**I**N JULY 1948, FORRESTAL put forward what proved to be a most important proposal in an effort to find a way out of another budgetary impasse. "Since the entire reason for the maintenance of military forces in this country is the safeguarding of our national security," he said in a memorandum to Pres-

ident Truman, "their size, character, and composition should turn upon a careful analysis of existing and potential dangers to our security." He called for the writing of a comprehensive statement of America's "national policy . . . particularly as it relates to the Russians." Such a description, he was sure, would make the case for a larger budget.

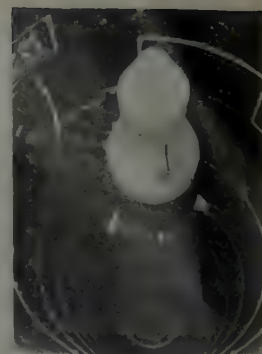
Truman did not accept this reasoning, and in March 1949 in effect fired Forrestal from his post of Secretary of Defense. A broken man, Forrestal killed himself two months later.

In late summer of that year, the Russians tested their first atomic device. It dramatically expanded the American sense of danger, and changed Truman's thinking. In January 1950, Truman gave the go-ahead for the "super," as the hydrogen bomb was called, as well as the required delivery systems. At the same time, he retrieved Forrestal's proposal for an overall assessment of America's foreign and domestic policies.

The paper was drafted in February and March of 1950 by State and Defense Department officials, under the leadership of investment banker Paul Nitze, who had succeeded George Kennan as head of the Policy Planning Staff. The document became known as National Security Council memorandum sixty-eight (NSC-68). One of the most important papers in the history of American foreign policy, it has only recently been made available to researchers.

NSC-68 expressed the fully formed Cold War mental set of American leaders. It provided the rationalization for the hydrogen bomb and for a greatly enlarged military establishment. Indeed—and here is its crucial impact—it defined the Soviet threat as limitless and so provided the basis for an endless expansion of the defense budget. NSC-68 was a fitting memorial to James Forrestal.

Its picture of Stalinist Russia was not particularly exaggerated, for at the time few in the West fully comprehended how monstrous Stalin's regime was. But, as terrible as the repression was in the Soviet Union, it did not necessarily follow that the Soviet Union was committed to world domination. Here NSC-68 offered interpretation rather than fact. "The Kremlin is inescapably militant," said the paper, "because it possesses and is possessed by a world-wide revolutionary movement, because it is the inheritor of Russian imperialism, and because it is a totalitarian dictatorship. . . . It is quite clear from Soviet theory and practice that the Kremlin seeks to bring the free world under its dominion by the methods of the cold war." The Soviet Union's "fundamental design" necessitated the destruction of the U.S.



Wide World

#### **Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (LGM-30G).**

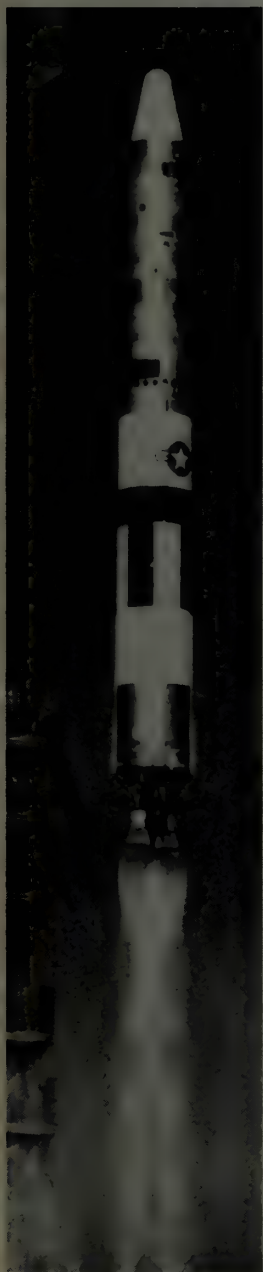
An improvement on the Minuteman II, this missile employs the Mark 12 MIRV reentry vehicle, with three warheads, each of which yields 170 kilotons. Our strongest ICBM force currently comprises 550 Minuteman IIIs, which are positioned at SAC bases in North and South Dakota and Wyoming. Minuteman III has a range of 8,075 miles, and travels at 15,000 miles per hour, taking approximately thirty minutes to reach its target. Each Minuteman III costs \$4.58 million. On August 9, 1976, the Senate passed an appropriations bill that included \$274.5 million for the purchase of sixty more Minuteman III missiles. This will raise our ICBM strength from its current total of 1,054 missiles to 1,114.

#### **Retrofitting of Mark 12A Warhead to Minuteman III.**

Among the programs to improve existing Minuteman III capabilities, aside from hardening of silos, is the retrofitting of the improved Mark 12A MIRV reentry vehicle, with three separate warheads yielding 200 kilotons each. At a cost of \$610,000 each, the retrofitting of 550 missiles will cost a total of \$335 million.



## Daniel Yergin THE ARMS ZEALOTS



**Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (LGM-25C).** Developed by the Martin Marietta Corporation, the Titan II became operational in 1963. Fifty-four remain operational today, in six squadrons under SAC command. Armed with the General Electric Mark 6 warhead, with a yield of ten megatons, they have a range of 7,250 miles, and a three-target selection capability.

For the most part, the apocalyptic premises of NSC-68 were instantly and wholeheartedly accepted by American leaders. The only dissenters were two experts on the Soviet Union, George Kennan and Charles Bohlen, neither of whom believed at this point that the Soviets had a world design. Both thought caution guided the Kremlin and that the Soviets sometimes only responded to Western actions.

George Kennan had begun to criticize Washington's exaggeration of Soviet intentions. "It is safer and easier to cease the attempt to analyze the probabilities involved in your enemy's processes or to calculate his weaknesses," Kennan wrote in his diary. "It seems safer to give him the credit of every doubt in matters of strength, and to credit him indiscriminately with *all* aggressive designs, even when some of them are mutually contradictory." Kennan's comment is as apt today as in 1950.

### The defense of the budget

**B**Y THE MIDDLE 1970s, the defense of the defense budget had again become an issue. The heavy military expenditures for Vietnam were coming to an end, and there was much talk about a "peace dividend." Inflation had made everything more expensive, and it worried those with a bureaucratic or economic stake in the development of new technology. Meanwhile, a "McGovernite" spirit on defense spending was alleged to be abroad in the Congress, and the prospect of even small cuts was alarming, as was the possibility of a new Democratic administration in 1977 that would be committed to further arms control.

Suspicion and hostility had developed against Henry Kissinger in almost every agency, including the State Department itself. Defense and the Joint Chiefs felt bitter about the "back channels" and the way they had been shut out of the SALT negotiations. The Yom Kippur war in 1973 created a new skepticism about detente and Soviet intentions, and delivered a traumatic shock to many members of the Jewish community who, until then, had leaned toward arms control. The concurrent rebirth of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union caused further skepticism. Revelations by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and other dissidents about the horrors of Stalinism and neo-Stalinism raised questions for many people about the "morality" of detente.

Finally—and this point should not be misinterpreted—the Soviets *have* increased the size and quality of their military establishment. It really is a society where the military con-

stitutes a very powerful state within a state. (Such an arrangement also provides a means for wasting a great deal of resources.)

Those are the reasons for this broad and diverse coalition, but what about the case? What is the basis for believing that we are confronted with a Soviet military buildup as large-scale and dangerous as the AC would have us believe? The three major "circumstances" that provided the "proof" for the buildup have been handily summarized for us by one of AC's leading publicists, Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham (Ret.). Formerly the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, and controversial because of his role in estimating enemy strength during the Vietnam war,\* he is now a research professor of international studies at the Center for Advanced International Studies at the University of Miami. He recently served on Team B, the high-level review committee charged by President Ford in his departing days with reevaluating CIA analyses of Soviet strength. Team B apparently concluded that the CIA was much too soft on the subject. General Graham belongs to the National Strategy Committee of the American Security Council, and his articles on the Soviet buildup appear in publications as diverse as *Air Force* magazine and the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal*.

Let us take the general's "circumstances," as he summarized them for the readers of *The Wall Street Journal*. These circumstances are critical, the heart of the matter, the evidence with which the AC builds its apocalyptic vision of the Soviet military buildup.

Circumstance number one, according to Graham: "We have found that our old assessments of Soviet military spending—that it represented only some 6 percent to 8 percent of the U.S.S.R.'s gross national product—were way off-base. It is now agreed in intelligence circles that Russia is devoting two to three times that much."

Estimates of Soviet military spending have often been used as political tools, and these most recent are no exception. General Graham himself was being a little disingenuous in suggesting that the intelligence community had suddenly "discovered" an increase in spending. In an article he wrote in 1976, he himself pointed out that the Defense Intelligence Agency had for some time refused to accept the CIA's estimates. What apparently happened was that, in the period 1974-76, the CIA's analysts had buckled under to pressure from other agencies, and they came to agree that the Soviets were spending 11 to 13 per-

\* See "Vietnam Cover-up: Playing War with Numbers," by Sam Adams, *Harper's*, May 1975.



ent of GNP on defense, as opposed to 5.5 percent for the United States.

According to General Graham, we should draw back in terror at these new "estimates," not because they prove that the Soviet Union is stronger but because they prove that the Soviet Union *intends* to be stronger, that they demonstrate, in Graham's words, "Moscow's resolve to extend Soviet military advantages, where they exist, cancel out the few remaining United States advantages, where they exist, and achieve recognition as the prime military power in the world."

These "estimates" demonstrate no such thing, and tell us very little. The revised figures are upward revisions of estimates of what it costs the Soviets to pay for their military force and equipment; they have nothing to do with any real change in the numbers or kinds of weapons. The estimators have even made this admission, but so quietly that it has been submerged under the headlines. The former CIA director, George Bush, explained to a Congressional committee last year that the new estimate "does not signify a dramatic jump in the size of Soviet defense programs. It does reflect an increase in our assessment of the cost of these programs." In the past, it was assumed that Russia's defense sector was insulated from the gross inefficiency that gums up its civilian economy. Now, as another CIA official expressed it last year, "We have come to a realization that the Soviet military production complex is not as efficient as we thought it was; it is about half as efficient as we thought it was, and much closer to civilian efficiency, if you please."

So the Soviets are in actuality *not* spending more, but we have concluded they spend more *than we had thought* to achieve the same effect.

The AC has another way of demonstrating that the Russians are outspending us. Its members like to quote huge estimates of what the Russians would be spending were they in the position to spend dollars. Such comparisons are notoriously tricky. It's what economists refer to as "the old index-number problem." The method is to figure out what it would cost us in dollars in our society to build this MIG or that Soviet missile, and to add up all such costs. The question is, How much would it cost the U.S. in dollars to field the Soviet military, given what everything costs here? Thus, if we increase the amount of money we spend—on wages for our soldiers, for instance—the assigned cost of the Soviet army automatically goes up. "Soviet wages are generally much lower than American wages," Rep. Les Aspin has observed. "But by computing Soviet manpower costs at U.S. rates, one discovers a huge

Soviet defense manpower 'budget' of over \$50 billion that exists only in American documents. Using this methodology, the largest single reason that Soviet defense spending exceeds our own has been the American decision to switch to an all-volunteer army and to pay its servicemen civilian-level wages. The absurdity of this calculation then becomes clear: If the United States were to shave its military pay scales, Soviet defense 'spending' would fall."

Now, the relative defense efforts can be compared in rubles as well as in dollars. This is no less valid in economic terms. Under this system, we ask what would it cost in rubles for the Russians in their society to build a Minuteman, and so on. That type of comparison leads to the opposite conclusion. "Comparisons in dollars exaggerate Soviet defense expenditures relative to our own," observes Franklyn Holzman, professor of economics at Tufts University, and author of *Financial Checks on Soviet Defense Expenditures*. "For example, American GNP is roughly *one-and-a-half* times the Soviet when both are measured in dollars but *three times* when both are in rubles. Defense comparisons in rubles are never published—these would exaggerate American defense expenditures relative to the Russians'." Very little actual analysis has been done in the way of ruble comparison. The Deputy Director of the CIA politely pointed last year to the "scarcity of resources we have devoted to this problem." One can see why.

In fact, much American military technology is simply beyond Russian capabilities right now. So we can put a dollar price on what they do, but it is virtually impossible to put a ruble price on important things we do. "There's a fundamental problem in trying to price every single weapons system, let's say, of the United States in rubles," said the CIA deputy director. "In many of these the Soviets do not have the technology to produce the very advanced systems. Theoretically the price would be infinite, and we would have to leave some of those weapons out of our calculations, because it wouldn't make any sense." It would also end up making American defense expenditures (expressed in rubles) look much higher.


**C**IRCUMSTANCE TWO, according to Graham "has been a new awareness of a large, continuing, Soviet civil-defense effort, which was greatly stepped up after the ABM agreement and the accompanying Strategic Arms Limitation agreement in Moscow in 1972." The significance of a major Soviet civil-defense effort, according to the



UPI

**UGM-27C Polaris A-3 Missile.** The missile has a range of 2,880 miles and delivers three MIRV warheads, each with a yield of 200 kilotons. Contrary to frequent reports, the United States currently deploys not ten but fourteen of the nuclear-powered long-range patrol submarines which launch this missile, five in the Ethan Allen class, five in the George Washington class, and four in the Resolution class. The boats are 380 feet long, weigh 7,000 tons, and have a range of 4,500 miles and seventy patrol days; each has sixteen launching tubes and carries sixteen missiles aboard. The Polaris fleet, therefore, disposes 224 SLBMs (submarine-launched ballistic missiles), or 672 warheads. Each submarine with its complement of SLBMs costs \$50 million.





**UGM-73A Poseidon C-3 Missile.** The U.S. Navy deploys thirty-one Poseidon submarines, nineteen in the Lafayette class and twelve in the Benjamin Franklin class. The Poseidon submarine is somewhat larger than the Polaris, weighing 8,500 tons, and is longer by fifty-five feet, but it has the same range of 4,500 miles and seventy patrol days. The missile system is far more sophisticated. Each has a MIRV delivery capability of from ten to fourteen warheads, each yielding fifty kilotons. The missile is thirty-two feet long, weighs thirty-four tons, has a range of 2,880 miles, and takes fifteen to twenty minutes to reach its target. Each Poseidon submarine with its complement of SLBMs costs \$110 million.

The Polaris and Poseidon fleets, together operating from bases in Holy Loch, Scotland; Rota, Spain; and Guam, carry 720 SLBMs with from 5,632 to 7,616 warheads.

AC, is that it indicates that Russian leaders believe that many or most of their people and much of the economic infrastructure can survive a nuclear war. American nuclear thinking is based on the idea of deterrence and MAD—Mutual Assured Destruction, a thesis that restricts either side from launching nuclear war because the result would be catastrophe. But, according to Graham, the Soviet Union can now plan for a first strike and victory, confident of a high survival rate.

To many in the AC, the Soviet civil-defense “offensive” is convincing stuff. One of General Graham’s most pessimistic collaborators is Maj. Gen. George Keegan, Jr., formerly director of Air Force Intelligence. The Soviet civil-defense effort, Keegan said not long ago, “was the decisive turning point in my judgment that we had already lost the strategic balance.” His conversion came four years ago, he said, explaining, “The implication is that they have quietly and at great expense taken measures to assure that the essential civilian-military leadership, the fighting capability and the production capacity can continue to function under conditions of total war. What it all means is that the Soviets believe they can survive a nuclear war.”

The Soviets do have a more active civil-defense program than we do, and any major effort at “damage limitation” is going to raise questions about the stability of deterrence. But what does Soviet civil defense really signify? And could it be effective?

The AC assumes a Soviet intent to develop a civil-defense system necessary for a first-strike capability. They have yet to support that point with any real evidence. The civil-defense program is far too small-scale for a potential “offensive.” One might just as readily conclude that the Russians are afraid of a war. After all, they actually fought military battles with the Chinese in 1969. There is another consideration, which the AC totally ignores. World War II is very much part of contemporary Soviet culture, and was a very painful period in Soviet history. While American gross national product almost doubled, the Soviet Union was devastated. Twenty million of its citizens died, and virtually every family was touched. Only 2 percent of that number of Americans was killed. Were experiences reversed, most American leaders would feel compelled to pay obeisance to civil defense.

As to the value of the Soviet program, many in the AC believe in the importance of civil defense in this nuclear age. (In fact, they “discovered” the Soviet civil-defense program a couple of years ago, in the course of trying to stir up funding for an American program.)

However, their arguments lack persuasiveness. They sometimes reach back to the Strategic Bombing Survey, done shortly after World War II, to suggest that air raids are not so damaging. They make two mistakes in so doing. They forget that the Strategic Bombing Survey was itself a tool in the postwar battle over unification of the military services, and they stretch the bounds of credulity when they suggest that a “survivability” quotient can be derived by comparing the effects of conventional bombing on Germany over four years to the effects of many hundreds of nuclear bombs exploding within minutes. They also underestimate the long-lasting radiation effects.

For a civil-defense program to be effective, there must be practice exercises. We have no evidence that any such have taken place in the Soviet Union. Such exercises are unlikely, for they might well set off a panic that could not be contained.

The AC flourishes sundry Soviet civil-defense manuals. We cannot guess how authoritative these are. After all, our own Civil Defense Preparedness Agency claims to have identified shelter capacity for about 227 million persons, including space for 6 million people in some 2,000 mine shafts—and no one takes all that very seriously. The Soviet literature has the same general quality.

Take, for instance, *Civil Defense: A Soviet View*, translated and published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force. We are told that it is a *very* significant document. Many who believe this have obviously not read it. Thirty pages, some 10 percent of the total, is devoted to the proper use of gas masks in case of nuclear war. And here is what it says to do when the nuclear war is over: “The ‘all clear’ signal is given to inform the population that the threat of attack has passed. The signal is transmitted over the radio with the words: ‘Attention! Attention! This is the civil defense staff speaking. Citizens! The danger of attack has passed. The air raid alert is lifted.’ . . . On this signal, all citizens leave the blast shelters and fallout shelters and go about their business.”

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### Figuring the balance

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GENERAL GRAHAM’s third circumstance involves actual numbers: “U.S. hopes that detente and arms-control negotiations would diminish Soviet emphasis on military power—and hopes that were reflected in earlier national estimates—have been dashed by the unprecedented scope and scale of Russia’s military buildup since the inception of detente in May 1972.”



There is no question that Soviet military strength has been growing in every realm. Still, the AC has been exaggerating, and, I believe, doing a real disservice by overstating Soviet capabilities and denigrating our own. Much of what the Soviets are deploying today is the result of decisions taken in the early and middle 1960s, when Henry Kissinger was just another Harvard professor.

The question of Soviet might can be broken down into three parts. The first and the most dramatic involves strategic arms—the missiles, bombers, and warheads that would be called into action in a nuclear war.

If one figures the strategic balance one way, the Soviets look better. They have more missiles (2,450 to our 2,123), heavier missiles, and bigger warheads. But, if one figures it another way, the U.S. looks better. Our weapons are more sophisticated and more accurate. Given the deployment of MIRVs (several warheads on one missile), we have 8,500 strategic warheads versus 4,000 for the Russians—and we have added 3,000 during the past five years.

Let us take one of the AC's "worst case" scenarios—an extraordinarily improbable, even fantastic, case. Even if *all* our land-based ICBMs were destroyed in a Soviet first strike, *all* of our bombers, and three quarters of our submarines, we would still be able to deliver 1,600 warheads from surviving submarines—not only destroying Soviet society, but also making much of that land mass uninhabitable.

Even to make such a case, the AC must suggest strongly that the Russians intend an unexpected first strike. That is why the AC needs that civil-defense argument so badly.

**T**HE KEYS OF DESTRUCTION on both sides are vast, much greater than required for the task of destroying either society. The bomb dropped on Hiroshima was the equivalent of about 13,000 tons of TNT. The Soviet nuclear arsenal is equivalent to 5.4 billion tons of TNT; the American arsenal, to 4.2 billion tons. The overkill capacity is fantastic on both sides, and both sides know it. It makes any notion of superiority impossible. A madman might try something, but then God help us all. While the Russian leaders are many things, as George Kennan has pointed out, "they are not mad."

The second part of the question of Soviet might concerns the Soviet naval "buildup"—which involves the most extreme case of oversell. Certainly, the Soviet navy has grown considerably from what it was—which was virtually nothing. In terms of tonnage, the Soviet bloc navies are about a third of those of the West-

ern allies. But one would think from the headlines that the ratio was reversed. For instance, the Department of Defense claimed last year that the Soviet Union had built 205 "major combatants" between 1965 and 1976, as opposed to 165 for the U.S. But information it subsequently was compelled to provide to Sen. Patrick Leahy indicated otherwise, for it turned out that a large number of the Soviet "major combatants" were nothing more than small escort ships, and that, in fact, between 1961 and 1975, the U.S. had built 122 "major surface combatants" of more than 3,000 tons, while the Russians had built just 57.

The hullabaloo of the "buildup" campaign tends to obscure the shift in the conventional military balance in Europe, which is the third part of the equation. In the past decade, the Russians have added 130,000 men to their Warsaw Pact forces, and they have introduced new tanks and other advanced weapons at a rapid rate. It is thought they are producing as many as 2,000 tanks a year and are now introducing the Backfire bomber and a new intermediate-range missile, the SS-20. Although these developments are cause for worry, the AC goes on to claim that the Soviets now have the advantage. This is still oversell, and not very helpful for the Europeans. In terms of manpower, the Warsaw Pact is up to 920,000, while NATO has about 700,000. We also have 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. Moscow no doubt recognizes the potential unreliability of its Eastern European allies, which could explain some of the Soviet additions. Furthermore, the overall quality of the equipment is still unknown. One recent defector, a high-ranking military official in the Warsaw Pact who was taken seriously by Western intelligence, brought tales of gross malfunctions—one-third of the armored vehicles actually failing to start in maneuvers.

It is absurd to think that the Soviets would want to launch an invasion of Western Europe. If they could get away with it, fine, but the risks are not minimal. "You know, you always have to differentiate when you talk about people," George Kennan has said, "between what they theoretically think would be just dandy, and what they really expect to achieve in the near future. I've often used the example of the businessman who would love to make \$1 million, but he'd be very happy if he could cover his debts for the next two months. Now the Soviet Union remains ideologically committed, surely, to a Communist world. But they live in a real world and their real hopes and plans and their real actions have to be geared to their real possibilities."

Nevertheless, the buildup is real, and may



**UGM-96A Trident C-4 Missile.** The Navy plans at first to build ten General Dynamics Trident submarines, with eventually twenty to follow. The prototype is due for completion in 1979. After that, construction is planned for two to three boats per year. The estimated cost to complete the program for the first ten Trident submarines is \$18 billion.

The Trident submarine will be 535 feet long and weigh 18,000 tons. It will hold not sixteen but twenty-four missile launchers; each missile, with a MIRV, will deliver seventeen warheads. The yield of each warhead has not been disclosed. This means, however, that each Trident submarine will dispose 408 warheads, adding 4,080 warheads to our SLBM arsenal. The first ninety-six Trident I missiles, with a range of 4,600 miles, have been ordered, at a cost of \$15.6 million each.

**Retrofitting of Trident I missile to ten Poseidon SSBNs.** A program is under way to retrofit sixteen Trident I missiles, developed by Lockheed Missile and Space Company, into each of ten Poseidon SSBNs, at a cost of \$2.7 billion, or \$16.88 million for each missile and launch tube.



have considerable impact. We do have to be attentive to Soviet strength in Eastern Europe and the ways in which this power is perceived in Western Europe. In the case of a Yugoslavian crisis when Tito dies, for instance, both the reality and the perception of the wealthy could affect decisions on both sides. NATO definitely requires greater commitment and resources.

Another cause for real concern is represented by the Soviet-Cuban adventure in Southern Africa. This kind of involvement is unprecedented for the Soviet Union, which is being helped along by muddled thinking and a weak response on our part. We do not have to believe that the Soviet actions are part of some Kremlin master plan to realize that the Soviets do want to expand their influence and military presence and that our interests require an effective answer.

### Arms control and security

OVERALL, WE CAN identify at least seven reasons for the U.S.S.R. continuing to strengthen its military posture: (1) A feeling of vulnerability; (2) Bureaucratic momentum—they build tanks because they build tanks; (3) Arms-race momentum—when you are in a race, you race; (4) To establish a credible war-fighting capability as a deterrent or in case war should break out; (5) To politically “overawe” their rivals; (6) To better project their power; (7) To get themselves into position for the first strike.

The AC broods mostly about the last of these. Yet, based on what we know, that is the only one that is currently not credible. It is possible that some of the members of the AC do not actually believe in point seven, but feel that they must engage in such oversell to arouse the attention of a bored or indifferent audience. But it is a very misleading maneuver.

The AC deserves a most serious hearing. After all, if they are right, then we are in trouble. Perhaps it will turn out that we should go ahead with those very expensive B-1 bombers and Trident submarines programs and other new weapons systems that the Pentagon and its allies are trying to get through Congress. But, the AC does have a responsibility to make its case in a fair and accurate way. As we are bombarded with their newspaper broadsides, we should remember that what is at the heart of the debate is not numbers, but interpretation—of Soviet ambitions and intentions—and the AC’s interpretations are not terribly convincing.

In the past few years, there has been a sub-

tle but important shift in the arguments of the AC—away from emphasizing the reality of the military balance toward an emphasis on the perception of this balance in the two superpowers and the rest of the world. Perhaps this new concern with perceptions is a result of the Vietnam war, which revealed that even the number-one superpower had its limitations. Today, certainly, the AC often says that because other people in the world regard the Soviets as stronger, they will gain an advantage and get their way. But it is the AC that now shapes those perceptions by overselling Soviet strength and underselling our own. If Europeans are worried, it is because they are told that the West is weak.

The process can be destructive. Gerard Smith, chief delegate to the first SALT talks, came up with ten dos and don’ts for negotiating arms control with the Russians. One of the most important was to discourage

*the practice of underrating our military posture vis-a-vis the Soviets as a means of getting Congressional appropriations for the Defense Department. The strength, variety and flexibility of our forces gave us ample bargaining power at the SALT talks, and in the next round the United States still holds the high card—technological superiority. The Soviets cannot match American scientific, engineering and industrial power. Yet consider what readers and listeners around the world have been told.*

*From the Soviet side, when the silence is broken, come self-assured statements that the Soviet strategic forces have what they need. From our side come expressions of concern about the growth of Soviet forces; worries about the vulnerability of American ICBM’s; charges that SALT has endowed us with inferiority; new targeting doctrines and strategic initiatives that resemble efforts to imitate Soviet force structures and their presumed capabilities. It would be ironic if the pattern of poor-mouthing our position at home should lead to a second-best image abroad.*

Serious arms control is more likely to promote our own security than an unrestrained arms race. Perhaps, finally, the Russians will turn out to be unwilling to cooperate, but the stakes are so large that we must try. There are risks in trying, but we must remember that all alternative courses of action also involve risks. Among those other courses are a destabilizing arms race that could end in apocalypse. We do well to ask, as the AC plays that old game of national security, whether it is not in the process of selling the United States—our strength, our capabilities, our intelligence, and our real interests—much too short. □



# SPOILED CHILDREN

by Andrew Sarris

**Haywire**, by Brooke Hayward. Alfred A. Knopf, \$10.

THE ENORMOUS critical and popular success of Brooke Hayward's harrowing memoir seems to prove the old adage that company loves misery. This book, already praised by such perceptive critics as Diane Johnson, Lois Gould, Joan Didion, and John Leonard, is the spring selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, and has been excerpted in *Esquire* and *Vogue*. Having found this lugubrious saga of family misfortune to be sour, self-pitying, mean-spirited, and badly written besides, I am completely baffled by all the bravos. Amid all the thunderous acclaim, no one seems to have found anything unseemly in all the snide attacks made in the book on the author's dead mother, Margaret Sullavan: I must confess that I am profoundly prejudiced on the subject. As it happens, I fell in love with Margaret Sullavan one evening in the Forties when I saw her on stage in *The Voice of the Turtle*. The catch in her voice, the spring in her

step, the delectable dropping of her dress have lingered in my mind all these years among the most exquisite memories of my adolescence.

Immediately thereafter I began to catch up on the fifteen movies she had made up to that time, from *Only Yesterday* in 1933 to *Cry Havoc* in 1943. Through the Forties, when I would ask people wise in the ways of show business why Margaret Sullavan had stopped making movies, they would mumble something about "children" and "family" and "the simple life" as if they were naming the most mysterious afflictions that could befall a celebrity. Margaret Sullavan returned to the screen in 1950 for what was to be her cinematic swan song, *No Sad Songs for Me*, in which the character she plays dies of cancer. Death figured prominently in many of her movies as if to foreshadow her own dismal fate in a lonely hotel room in 1960.

As an actress, Margaret Sullavan could make people laugh and she could make people cry. Furthermore, she could make people laugh when she was crying, and she could make people cry

when she was laughing. She was so wistfully serious, so desperately playful, that every moment on the screen or stage was charged with feeling. There was no facetiousness in her makeup, yet no pomposity either. Through the Thirties the usually cryptic and hard-headed Otis Ferguson hurled many bouquets at Miss Sullavan, and one of his most memorable was dedicated to her world-weary showgirl in *The Shopworn Angel* (1938): "For if you said, writing for the *Saturday Evening Post*, that the girl was knowing and tired, pert with her small mouth, stem of a torso, and low whispering voice, yet fresh with some wonder of dew still held in the inner leaves—you would have just those words and no more."

One felt, above all, that Margaret Sullavan had grown up believing that there was nothing special about being Margaret Sullavan. Everything had to be earned, and there were no second chances. By contrast, Brooke Hayward's *Haywire* exudes privilege and status with every name it drops. With the name-dropping comes more than a hint of a Hollywood princess waiting for the world to continue genuflecting before her long after her adoring parents have abandoned her. As a born outsider, I have limited patience with people who whine about how unhappy they are all through their jaunts from Beverly Hills to Saint Moritz. I do not doubt the unhappiness; one can be as unhappy in Beverly Hills as in Brooklyn. Still, I tend to agree with the lament of Lily Tomlin, another born outsider: "Why is it we are always hearing about the tragic cases of too much, too soon? What about the rest of us? Too little, too late."

If there is one moment in Margaret Sullavan's screen career that I treasure above all others, it is the moment in



Margaret Sullavan and John Boles in *Only Yesterday*, 1933.

Andrew Sarris, film critic of *The Village Voice*, is the author most recently of *The John Ford Movie Mystery*.



Only *Yesterday* when she stares across a crowded night club on New Year's Eve at her first love, who has long since forgotten her existence. He stares back at her, but clearly with anonymous lust rather than remembered love. She turns her eyes away from him to think, and in that eternal instant, she chooses to embrace her humiliating destiny. She then returns his gaze with a heartbreakingly flirtatious smile. There is more grace and gallantry in this one interlude on the screen than in all of Brooke Hayward's *Haywire*. This may prove only that Margaret Sullavan should have spent more time on her art, and less on her life. Unfortunately, the Haywards seemed to have become part and parcel of the Fonda, Mankiewicz, and Selznick clans, that strange configuration of Trojan horses in Hollywood, always priding themselves on being anti-tinsel, but never really founding an Algonquin round table either. The last thing any one of them would have expected was that Margaret Sullavan would bequeath to the world a film heritage of enduring enchantment.

MUCH OF THE unchallenged abuse of Margaret Sullavan can be attributed to the fact that Brooke Hayward and her devoted reviewers have little appreciation or even recollection of Sullavan's worth as an actress. If one can dismiss her as an artist, it makes it easier to denounce her as a parent. With authentically monstrous parents like Robert Frost and Ernest Hemingway there is at least the redeeming complexity of respected achievement. But one can stomp on a piece of Hollywood fluff like Margaret Sullavan with hobnailed boots. And setting everyone howling off after mother is daughter's description of her own endeavor: "This book is a personal memoir; but it is also a larger story—about carelessness and guilt, and the wreckage they can make of lives."

Later the author recalls describing herself in the Sixties in the most passively martyred terms: "I'm the daughter of a father who's been married five times. Mother killed herself. My sister killed herself. My brother has been in a mental institution. I'm twenty-three and divorced with two kids." The bill of indictment has been filed, and most

of the journalistic jurors have convicted the parents, and particularly the mother, with no recommendations for clemency. Out of an old emotional attachment I wish merely to plead for mercy for Margaret Sullavan. I have no firsthand testimony, since I never knew Margaret Sullavan or Leland Hayward or their three children, Brooke, Bridget, and William. All I can do is examine the printed evidence with a certain degree of skepticism.

Sly digs department: Millicent Osborn is quoted by Brooke Hayward on the subject of Margaret Sullavan: "Maggie was not a cruel person and yet she was capable of cruelty. One time, Paul and Maggie and I were having lunch at the Lafayette. The poor old chef came out—a little Frenchman with a high white hat; he walked over to the table where we sat and handed me an autograph book, and I said, 'No, this is Miss Sullavan.' He didn't speak any English, and Maggie confused the hell out of him by insisting that I was Miss Sullavan. And in order to stop that, I finally signed it."

The epithet "cruelty" seems excessive for this feeble anecdote, an example of clutching at straws to strengthen the case for the prosecution. Incidentally, one would never know from the reviews that the book is packed with pompous testimony from a variety of celebrities, none of whom is ever cross-examined. Mommy and daddy are never given a chance to talk back.

Still, daddy always came out ahead with daughter despite all his womanizing and his having precipitated the divorce. Speaking of the lascivious Leland Hayward and his virtually simultaneous courtships of "Kate" Hepburn and "Maggie" Sullavan, his daughter recalls: "He used to reminisce wistfully that Kate was the classiest dame he ever knew, because among other things, when he eloped with Mother, she'd sent a congratulatory telegram saying, 'DEAR MAGGIE, YOU HAVE JUST MARRIED THE MOST WONDERFUL MAN IN THE WORLD. BLESSINGS, KATE.' Mother burned up the wire in a rage of jealousy."

I yield to no one in my admiration for Katharine Hepburn, but on this occasion she behaved like a bitch. Yet note how Margaret Sullavan is once more made the heavy with the rhetorical overkill of "rage" instead of, say, "fit." Of course, one expects daughters

to love their fathers more than their mothers, and Brooke Hayward is no exception in this regard. It is strange, however, that Miss Hayward displays so little compassion for her mother, even when writing about the time her father was publicly flaunting his affair with another woman ("Slim" Hawks). Perhaps the nastiest aspect of *Haywire* is that the author prides herself on seeing through her mother but never bothers trying to understand her. Hence, what would be dignified as conflicts in others are exposed as insincerities in Sullavan: "Periodically, mother would go through her accounts and conclude she was going bankrupt. Nothing was further from the truth, but when she'd announce she was broke and would have to go back to work, we, in turn, would commiserate out loud and smile to ourselves, knowing that she'd read a script that excited her."

Yet, what of Brooke Hayward's plaintive wail in the Sixties: "I'm the daughter of a father who's been married five times. Mother killed herself. My sister killed herself. My brother has been in a mental institution. I'm twenty-three and divorced with two kids."

IT IS NOT entirely clear that either Margaret Sullavan or Bridget Hayward actually committed suicide. Brother Bill seems to have recovered sufficiently to function as an off-beat movie producer in association with Peter Fonda, and Brooke herself seems to have produced a best-seller. Besides, all family stories end badly sooner or later. Yet by focusing her emotional energy almost exclusively on the funeral parlor, Brooke Hayward makes us believe that a crime has been committed, and that we must find the culprits, preferably from an earlier generation. Some may feel that the Haywards are entombed in a Eugene O'Neill edifice of guilt and madness.

I prefer to think that *Haywire* is a humorless confirmation of Alison Lurie's ironic insight into supposedly monstrous maternity in *The War Between the Tates*:

*The worst part of it all is that the children are her fault. All the authorities and writers say so. In their innocent past Erica and Brian had blamed their own shortcom-*



ings on their parents while retaining credit for their own achievements. They had passed judgment on the character of acquaintances whose young children were not as nice as Muffy and Jeffo—But everyone did that. To have disagreeable parents excused one's faults; to have disagreeable children underlined them. The parents might not look especially guilty; they might seem outwardly to be intelligent, kind and charming people—but inside were Mr. and Mrs. Hyde. It was agreed everywhere, also, that Mrs. Hyde was the worse; or at least the more responsible. A father might possibly avoid blame for the awfulness of his children—a mother never.

Since the Mrs. Hyde in *Haywire* is clearly Margaret Sullavan, I shall continue her defense. John Leonard takes a cheap shot at her marital record in his review: "Margaret Sullavan... was no slouch at marrying, either. Before Haywood there had been Henry Fonda and William Wyler. After Haywood, there was Kenneth Wagg." For a sophisticated New Yorker, Leonard is surprisingly puritanical on this point. Sullavan's quickie marriages to Henry Fonda and William Wyler were show-biz affairs, the sort of relationships that are consummated nowadays in neon as unsanctified live-ins. Once she married Leland Haywood, and had her three children, she stuck to her marriage as long as it lasted. Even her daughter has not been able to dredge up any adulterous affairs. Quite the contrary, Virginia-born-and-bred Margaret Sullavan seems to have irritated her husband and children with her moral earnestness. But if she had been less strict in her old-fashioned notions of character and discipline, could she not be condemned today for having spoiled her children rotten in lush Hollywood style?

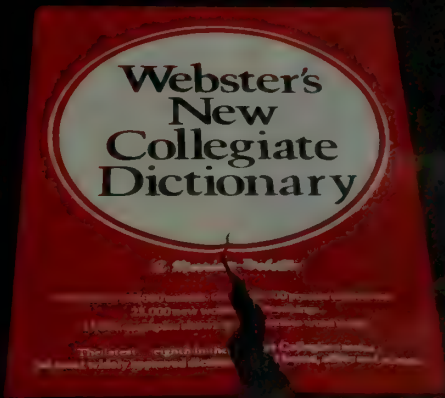
It is hard to realize that Margaret Sullavan was twenty-two when she made her first movie, and twenty-five when she married Leland Haywood, and yet we think of her in that period as a solemn grown-up. By contrast, Brooke Haywood is now about forty years old, and we think of her as a bewildered child, a permanent victim of parental manipulation. She is so vague about her own marital misadventures and career disappointments that we can never begin to determine at what point she can be considered responsi-

ble for her own life. Certainly, no one has had the temerity to suggest that *Haywire* has been motivated by a daughter's envy of her more talented and more accomplished mother. I suggest this possibility in line with the gossip that Brooke Haywood considered herself a great beauty when her chum Jane Fonda was considered an ugly duckling. With their mother having committed suicide and their father having much married, what kind of book could Jane and Peter have written if their luck had been bad instead of good?

Of course, the more glamorous people in show biz tend to indulge their elective affinities more assiduously than the rest of us. Perhaps glamorous and successful people should never have children at all. Margaret Sullavan's case is ironic in that she sacrificed considerable glamour and success for the sake of what she considered a healthy family life only to be renounced by her entire family for what was construed as her petty tyranny. She preferred Connecticut to Hollywood, the stage to the screen, privacy to publicity, and she demonstrated her prefer-

ences not by brave words at the edge of her Beverly Hills swimming pool, but by abrasive actions. Deep down, however, she wanted to be dragged screaming into stardom, but somehow she missed her opportunity. Her pictures were good enough to make her a cult figure, but never big enough to make her a myth. She worked with many of the most sensitive directors—Ernst Lubitsch, Frank Borzage, King Vidor, William Wyler, John Stahl, Elliott Nugent, Robert Stevenson. She made four lovely films with James Stewart, but he found stardom in the arms of Jean Arthur (with a big assist from Frank Capra). Despite a prodigious flair for comedy, she never cashed in on the vogue for screwball heroines. A few more projects around 1936 and 1937, and she might have been right up there with Lombard and Hepburn and Arthur and Dunne, but no, she was too busy doing *Stage Door*, a childish anti-Hollywood play by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber, later made into a stirringly pro-Broadway movie without Margaret Sullavan in the cast. She was also busy giving birth to Brooke Haywood. Later she

seis-mic



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### BOOKS

was rumored for the role in *Rebecca* that made Joan Fontaine a star. One can never know what might have been.

Still, those of us who loved Margaret Sullavan from afar always mourned her lost opportunities. But we never dreamed how little her career meant to her children. How else to explain this breathtaking bit of dream casting in *Haywire* shunted into a parenthetical afterthought to a standard complaint: "*A Streetcar Named Desire*, with my beloved Brando, was another example. Too provocative, she said, too overstimulating for someone my age to handle emotionally. All my friends went to the Saturday matinee at the Pickwick Theatre without me. (Ironically, Irene Selznick had offered my mother the role of Blanche DuBois in the original Broadway play, but on

*Father's advice she'd turned it down.* another reason for my interest; mother, however, was not to be swayed by that rationale.)"

The italics are mine, of course. Blanche DuBois! Exactly! *Streetcar* would have done for Sullavan what *The Glass Menagerie* did for Laurette Taylor, what *The Entertainer* did for Laurence Olivier, what *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* would have done for Henry Fonda if his agent had not turned it down without Fonda's knowledge—that is, make her talent vibrantly alive for a new generation. Brando and Sullavan. The sensitive slob-stud confronted by an authentically fading, but still iron-willed Southern belle. It might have capped her career. It might have even enabled her daughter to understand her, if not to forgive her. ■

## HARMONIES IN TIME AND SPACE

by Hayden Carruth

*Ceremony*, by Leslie Marmon Silko.  
Viking, \$10.

**D**ID LESLIE MARMON SILKO have in mind the word *tao* when she named the protagonist of her first novel? It's a striking resemblance, *tao* and Tayo. And clearly Tayo, who is a half-breed of the Laguna pueblo in New Mexico, where he is scorned by many for his mixed blood (and where his name, for all I know, may be common), and who is moreover a war veteran critically deranged by his experience of jungle combat, is much in need of finding the "way." He does find it, after prolonged illness and misdirection. He finds it in the traditional but modified beliefs of his Indian ancestors. Hence the title of the novel, *Ceremony*.

Here is what happens. At a particularly critical moment in the Philippines—the time is World War II and the years following—Tayo utters a curse against the dense tropical rain, which is hampering his effort to save the life of the person closest to him, his brother. The effort fails, the brother is lost, and Tayo, predictably and natu-

rally, is lost too, though in another way. "Battle fatigue," the medics tell him, and he spends a long time in an Army hospital in LA. But when eventually he is discharged and returns to the reservation, he remains as ill and mixed-up as ever, convinced that the drought he finds at home—withering crops, starving livestock, general poverty and despair—is the consequence of his blasphemy in the jungle. His "friends," other half-assimilated Laguna war veterans, call him simply crazy, see in him the surfacing taint of non-Indian blood, and turn against him; in the end they even try to liquidate him. Meanwhile Tayo seeks purification in the ceremonies of tribal medicine men, to no avail. Only after a long search does he find an old Indian, a maverick and outcast, a man of mixed blood like himself, who seems to possess the real wisdom of the ancient beliefs that is parodied in the rites of contemporary traditionalists.

*Ceremony*, the old man says in effect, is not ritual, not form. It is the conduct of life; ultimately the conduct of the earth and everything on it, of all motion and change, of the cosmos. And by means of visions and story he lays out a real ceremony, a plan of action, for Tayo to follow. The climax of the

Hayden Carruth, author of *The Bloomingdale Papers*, is an advisory editor of *The Hudson Review*.



novel, which comes appropriately in an abandoned uranium mine (our own mouth of hell), brings Tayo to a recognition of the genuinely ceremonial nature of existence, a recognition which saves him, and can save the rest of us, if we accept it, from participation in the unceremonious, straight-line, terminal progress of violence and death in our world. "From that time on, human beings were one clan again, united by the fate the destroyers planned for all of them, for all living things." In ceremony—the ceremony of earth and stars, time and evolution—we are all one.

And so the rains return, the grass and corn grow again, the animals fatten. Is it familiar? We have read this before in many versions, the Sumerian myth of Inanna, the Old Testament, *Parsifal*, *Orpheus and Eurydice*. But here we have a new version, contemporary yet as deeply rooted as the rest, for running throughout it, interwoven with the narrative, are native American songs, legends, parables, a religious-cultural mythology in the fullest sense, i.e., relevant, charged with meaning, ancient and anonymous. Timelessness, history, and the present moment fall together in the perfect alignment they of course fundamentally possess, even if only a few artists attempt to represent it, and fewer succeed.

AS IT HAPPENS, I have been reading *Ceremony* in France, in the southern Ardèche, which is a good place to read it. Just the other day I went to look at a particularly well-preserved dolmen at the end of a trail, crudely marked, near the village of St.-Alban-sous-Sampzon. Afterward I wandered off over the ruined mountainside, and within half a mile found another dolmen, unmarked and not nearly as well preserved, but unmistakable. I was delighted with myself. Nearby I found several fissured entrances to a huge underground *grotte*, into which I had the good sense not to venture, though the lure of imagined Neolithic wall paintings was strong. Still I had enough ruins for anyone on the surface: later ruins, a mingling of hundreds and thousands of crumbled walls spread over a wide area, houses, shepherds' huts, trails, and roadways, with here and there upright columns. Menhirs? Herms? Or only gateposts? I floun-

dered in my ignorance, but the main impression was clear enough. I had a strong sense of the passage and repassage of fated peoples over 4,000 years or more, conflicting cultures, geology in process—I could reach down and break off a piece of the eroded limestone almost wherever I wished. In short, layers of time. It was almost too much; it was frightening. I lay down and looked at the implacable, deep blue sky of the Midi. But here came, inevitably, an airplane roaring, and then I was aware of faint twanging guitars from a radio at a building site far below where workers were putting up ugly cement-block-and-stucco houses: the new layer, our own, the one we fear so much. I sat up. The ruins around me looked very much like ruined pueblos I had seen—at Casa Grande, for instance. (But why can't it have its Indian name instead of the one given by the despised Spanish conquerors?) The ruined mountain, the *collines* with their scrub growth of juniper and *chêne vert*, the distant gorges of the river

Beaume with their escarpments: I could have been in New Mexico. And my uneasy feeling, what was it but a sense of the sacredness of the place? Not divine, not supernatural; it was precisely *natural*—and, of course, precisely ancestral. My own Neolithic forebears had lived where I was sitting, hundreds of generations. Yes, I said to myself, thinking of the novel, it is ceremonial, all of it, in the deepest sense. Ceremonial means sacred.

If I, a displaced Yankee pragmatist, could feel this, how much stronger must be the feeling of Indians who have lived all their lives in just such sacred places. It strikes me now that this feeling is one of the world's really precious possessions, though God knows how many people are aware of it—or how few! And exactly this feeling is what Leslie Marmon Silko has expressed, without declaration or argument, in her book. Not that there isn't much more, too. Some readers, perhaps many, will be angered because, in spite of the vision of concord at the end, most of the

# Encounter Austria

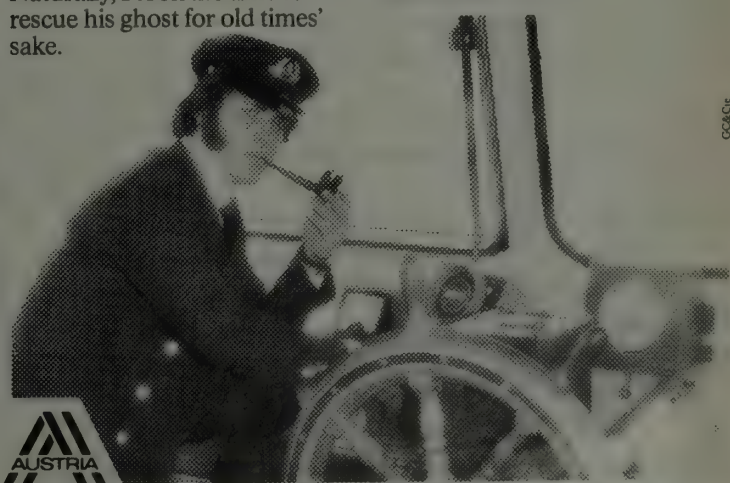
## I commanded a Danube steamer

The captain didn't know I took over his story-book steamer on the trip from Linz to Vienna, but I stood on the bridge giving my own orders to the wind. At Melk, we sailed through the incredible Wachau valley where ancient castles crown jutting slopes. At the wine-growing town of Duernstein, the fortress where Richard The Lionheart was held prisoner in 1193 soared above us. Naturally, I took the time to rescue his ghost for old times' sake.

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novel makes no attempt whatever to soften the bitterness of Indian feeling against the thefts and betrayals of white colonialists; and I imagine some Indians themselves will dislike it because it does not soften either the disagreements in the Indian community today. Militants will find it too moderate, traditionalists too radical. For my part, these considerations are easily set aside. The novel has been a moving, important experience for me, as it will be also, I'm sure, for many others.

Still, it is a first novel. Like most

first novels, unavoidably, it is ambitious, thematically very complex. And like most good ones it makes me wish the author had been able to save this story until her third or fourth attempt. Of course she couldn't; psychological and artistic necessity required the present work. *Ceremony* is flawed, especially in the first half, by narrative devices that seem too contrived and by occasional stylistic inconsistencies. But I'm sure Silko will write this story again. I don't know much about her, except that she, too, is a Laguna, of

mixed blood, a person who knows her people and their places well. Her stories and poems, as I have seen them over the past couple of years in little magazines and anthologies, have been far superior to the run, now almost a flood, of other native American writing. She is serious, gifted, and intelligent—not smart, not clever, but humanly, practically intelligent. Today that means a lot. We are grateful, at least I am and I hope others will be, for her presence, which alone is a consolation, and for this good book, *Ceremony*. ■■■

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

by Michael Malone

**An Exchange of Eagles**, by Owen Sela. Pantheon, \$8.95.

Nazi nostalgia has always been boffo business at bookstores, and this spring Fascism is in flower. Also high on the madness charts are those perennials, assassinations, government corruption, commando raids, and torture. Add downhill skiing, and you've got *An Exchange of Eagles*. *An Exchange of Eagles* should be confused with *The Rhinemann Exchange*, *The Valhalla Exchange*, and *The Eagle Has Landed*, for they are indeed, exchangeable. In the last, Churchill is almost kidnapped by Nazis; in Sela's book, Roosevelt and Hitler are almost assassinated by Nazis and Americans, while Churchill and J. Edgar Hoover (himself presumably assassinated in *The Chancellor Manuscript*) work to thwart the plot.

Historical figures wearing the emperor's new clothes of fiction are as "in" as Adolf, and this book parades everybody but the emperor of Japan. Goering, Himmler, Harry Hopkins, Lucky Luciano, and Lindbergh are all there. So are an unkillable American commando, an unflappable British agent, one page of sex, one dozen chases, and that inevitable countdown to catastrophe. Since it is widely known that no one ever succeeded in assassinating either Hitler or FDR, the plot ought to lack suspense, but such is our

willing suspension of good sense that it doesn't. It certainly lacks that high seriousness which Arnold thought necessary to art, but such is our willing suspension of good taste that we just don't care. As full of formulas as a Gerber's factory, *An Exchange of Eagles* works. It not only ought to be a movie, it is a movie.

**Journey to the End of the World**, by Charlene Gourguechon. Scribners, \$12.50.

A young public-relations woman working in Manhattan is by chance shown some photos of Melanesian primitives in the New Hebrides, an archipelago in the far western Pacific. Being a plucky, energetic, and solvent American girl, she immediately decides to quit her job, pack, and (because they're there?) go see them. So she does—the only female in a small anthropological expedition photographing tribes where "women are inferior, not only to men, but also to pigs." For three years she enthusiastically endures this chauvinist piggery, and also cyclones, malaria, earthquakes, shipwrecks, heat, hikes, a diet of yams and bats, and the nightly nibbling of rats on her toes. She loved it. She tells us,

*Michael Malone is the author of two novels, Painting the Roses Red and The Delectable Mountains.*

"I vomited my guts out." "Gnats glued themselves to our lips." "I lost my fingernails and toenails" to fungi. She tells us she had the time of her life, and, incidentally, married the expedition's French filmmaker. King Kong she missed.

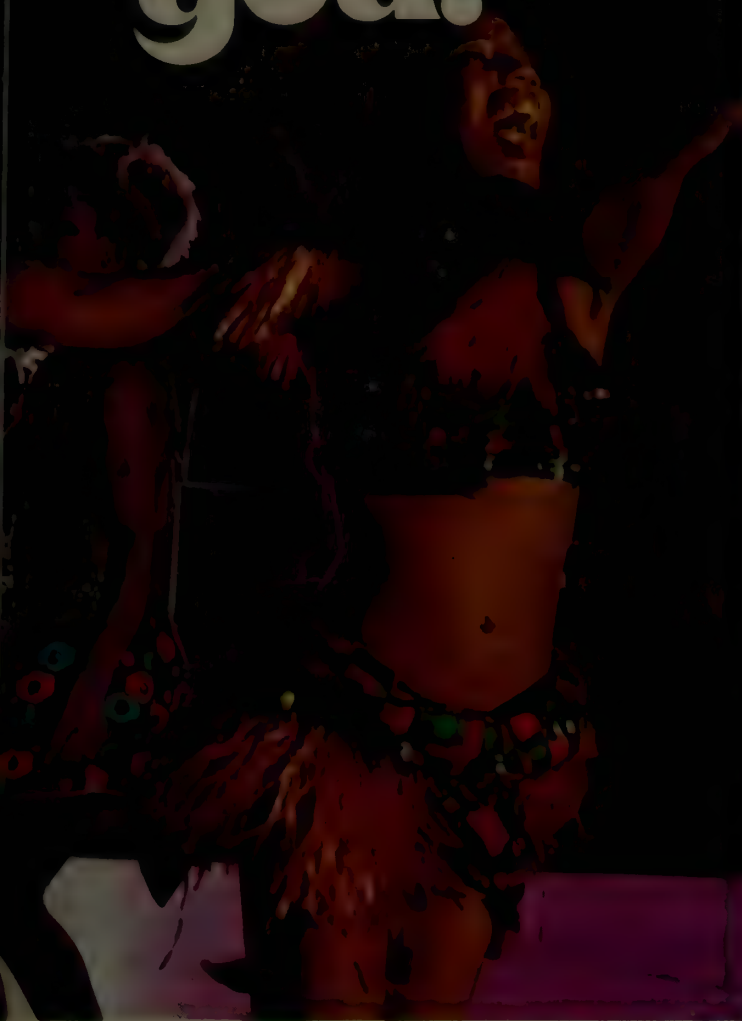
Episodic, informative, lively, crowded with colorful characters and uncommon experiences, Charlene Gourguechon's *Journey* describes many Namba ceremonies and taboos never before witnessed by civilized people, and, in case we think some of these customs and rituals a bit savage, we have only to read her historical sketch of the horrors inflicted by civilized people on these former cannibals. This intrepid Westerner asked nothing from the Melanesians, except, of course, the chance to write a book that says she saw them.

**The Camera Never Blinks: Adventures of a TV Journalist**, by Dan Rather with Mickey Herskowitz. Morrow, \$10.

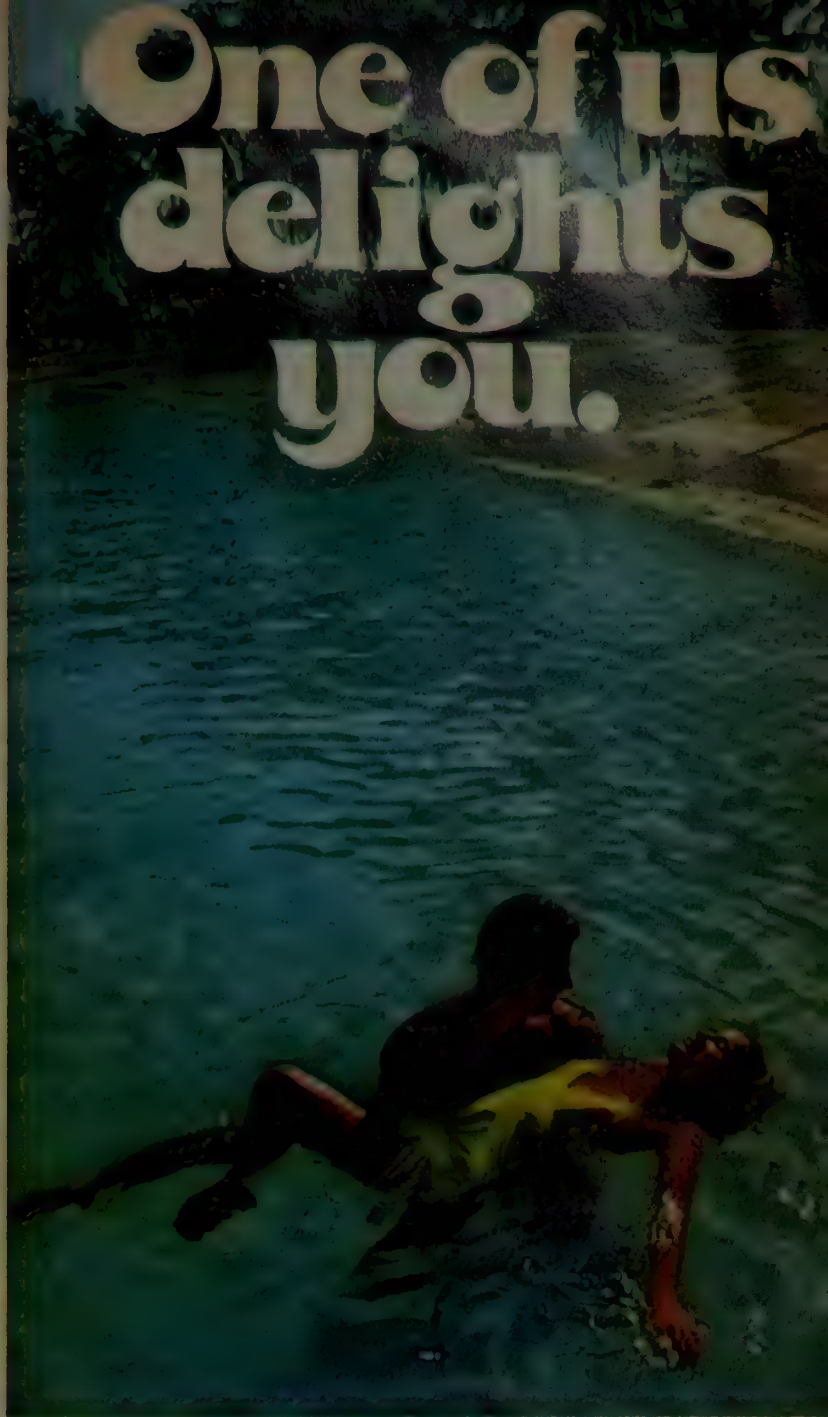
There are journalists, like Defoe, who have written excellent books. There are journalists, like Churchill, who have written excellent autobiographies. There are journalists, like Dan Rather, who are photogenic. He is not "himself sole author of his own disgrace." Regrettably, the ghost-writer



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## BOOKS

of *The Camera Never Blinks* does nod, and the result is Rather rambling in and out of the scoops of his career, sounding at his best like bad Raymond Chandler: "Integrity, ethics, and hard work were the only fish he sold." If Wilde is right that we can forgive anything but a badly written book, we can forgive Rather his self-satisfaction (the physical risks he took at Ole Miss and in Vietnam, his role in what he calls "The Unmaking of the President," his lead with news of Kennedy's death when he was "lucky" enough to be in Dallas at the time, his lead with news of King's death). We can forgive him his code of ethics: of Ruby's shooting of Oswald, Rather reports, "And CBS missed it. . . . We had waited ten seconds too long. I felt physically sick. For the first time in that entire nightmare of a weekend, I just about threw up." His wife, his "conscience," is at times, he confesses, "a little irritated with me. In human terms." But, in Wilde's terms, we cannot forgive him *The Camera Never Blinks*. People will read it, of course; it is full of VIPs doing VI Things. Our insatiable appetite for the private lives of other people is matched only by their willingness to publish their lives. "It is the nature of extreme self-lovers, that they will set a house on fire, to roast their eggs." The remark is Bacon's; the eggs are Rather scrambled.

**Search at Loch Ness**, by Dennis Meredith. Quadrangle, \$9.95.

Unlike Troy, the moon, the atom, giant pandas, and the sound barrier, the Loch Ness monster has not yet been captured. This brief account of the latest search for the creature now tagged *Nessiteras rhomboteryx* is good-humoredly written by one of the participants, Dennis Meredith, managing editor of MIT's *Technology Review*. In the summer of 1976, Robert Rines of the Academy of Applied Science led an expedition back to the huge, deep lake near Inverness in northern Scotland where he is convinced live perhaps as many as thirty enormous plesiosaurish beasts with long serpentine necks, humps, small heads, and flippers. Time snickered; the British Museum and the Smithsonian sedately "pooh-poohed," but that adventurous Gray Lady, the *New York Times*, lent Rines her money and prestige. The re-

sults were inconclusive. Inconclusive because, while for hundreds of years thousands of people say they have seen "Nessie," no mechanical instrument has recorded her with incontrovertible evidence. Scientists are often apt to say, "I'll see it when I believe it," and they don't believe it.

In his engaging and wittily defensive narrative, Meredith suggests that Nessie is a flirt, coyly flashing herself at native fishermen and tourists, but playfully dodging her persistent suitors with their lures of snacks, mating calls, and even Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. However, while unsuccessfully scanning for monster fossils, the sonar expert Marty Klein did discover two mammoth prehistoric stone rings, like those at Stonehenge, on the loch floor. So science was victorious. But Grendel's mother, and such the monster may have been, remains elusive—so far preferring, like Bigfoot, life in myth to life in a museum.

**Walking Through the Fire**, by Laurel Lee. E. P. Dutton, \$6.95.

There is a journey beside which the mystery and terror of a voyage even to the end of the world is the simplest of undertakings, the journey within. *Walking Through the Fire* is the hospital journal of a young woman who learns, while carrying her third child that she is dying of Hodgkin's disease. A personal diary interspersed with her small poems and simple drawings, the book is not artful, it is not "art," not is it meant to be. Laurel Lee has the rare talent to use language with a vital honesty, though she is not an extraordinarily gifted artist. She is simply an intelligent woman graced with faith with understanding, and with the life-loving humor that is the triumph of humanity.

Lee did not write this book to publish it—though dying may be fashionable now, and books on how to die may well become TV mini-series. But *Walking Through the Fire* is not a book on how to die; instead, it is the experience of one person who lived, though in the awesome, inescapable company of death. Like *The Diary of Anne Frank*, it is a private journal whose truths are universal, and whose courage reminds us that the bravest acts often take place in small rooms. IIII

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# VERSE

by David Bottoms

## THE DRUNK HUNTER

Spun on a flat rock  
his whiskey bottle points out magnetic north.  
All afternoon trees stagger downhill  
and up along ridges above thick brush.  
He stops to watch them sway  
and drinks the last of his Tennessee whiskey,  
shoots the bottle off a pine stump.  
Thinking there must be a logging road near,  
he secretly hopes that someone heard his shot,  
takes time to warn he's hunting posted land.

Come morning they will praise his patience,  
tell stories in camp of a tree stand  
frozen over a creek, how *old Jack never would come back empty-handed*. In two or three days  
they will tell what found him in the deeper woods.

## SHOOTING RATS AT THE BIBB COUNTY DUMP

Loaded on beer and whiskey, we ride  
to the dump in carloads  
to turn our headlights across the wasted field,  
freeze the startled eyes of rats against mounds of rubbish.

Shot in the head, they jump only once, lie still  
like dead beer cans.  
Shot in the gut or rump, they writhe and try to burrow  
into garbage, hide in old truck tires,  
rusty oil drums, cardboard boxes scattered across the mounds,  
or else drag themselves on forelegs across our beams of light  
toward the darkness at the edge of the dump.

It's the light they believe kills.  
We drink and load again, let them crawl  
for all they're worth into the darkness we're headed for.

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Mind—Order—Energy—may these not be summed up in one word: Consciousness? Behind all a Universal Consciousness, impersonal, eternal. It composes the order of matter, the sensitivity of life, and that personal awareness that is Self.

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## THE MOST VISIONARY MODERNIST

A review of Pierre Boulez's "Rituel"

by F. Joseph Spieler

FOR MOST AMERICANS who count themselves as lovers of classical music, their experience of the avant-garde has been less than happy. With the development of serial music by Arnold Schönberg in the Twenties and the numerous experimental schools that developed from it, avant-garde composition discarded historical definitions of melody, rhythm, linearity, and, in some cases, any agreed-upon musical language it could share with a lay audience. In its rejection of accepted musical forms and subject matter, the movement has sought inspiration in mathematics, in randomness, in science, in unordered emotions, and often in the mundane. In too many instances, composers have offered their experimentation as thought-through, finished work and expected audiences to accept it, so that many listeners think modern music means merely noise at a price.

With the loss of established musical rules and the continuing presence of electronics as a compositional force has also come the devaluation of meaning—the notion that musical sounds have an interpretive function. Meaning, in the sensibility ascribed to the avant-garde, is archaic: things don't mean, they just are. And, indeed, much avant-

*F. Joseph Spieler is an editor and critic.*

garde composition is preoccupied with creating sonic constructions whose value is more technical than musical and with developing new forms of expression even in the absence of something to express. More recently, avant-garde music seems to have entered a state of torpor, its creativity mired in a narcissistic dead end. While such music can be said to call attention to the uncertainty, despair, and obsessions of its time, it has held forth little promise of repair and regeneration.

The consequences have been unfortunate: the performance of avant-garde music has become, in the main, a commerce for academics and small, interested groups, while audiences at large are perceived, and not without reason, as hostile outsiders. On the relatively few occasions that very modern music is played by major institutions for large audiences, such as the performance of John Cage's "Renga with Apartment House 1776" last November by the New York Philharmonic, listeners react with anger and scorn, hooting as they run for the exit. Music directors, worried about mounting deficits and loss of public support, respond by programming either a greater number of time-tested and performance-worn compositions or music by contemporary composers who prefer more conventional forms.

NEVERTHELESS, it would be wrong to condemn avant-garde music for fakeness (though there has been quite a bit of it) or to dismiss it as misguided. Avant-garde art justifies itself if only by serving to perceive the unsuitability of existing forms to engage emerging experience. Though the beauty and power of great music of the past is eternal, its forms age; to put it another way, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* will live with us forever, but would we countenance a play about Richard Nixon written in the English of Shakespeare?

The recent failings of avant-garde music do not make it a failure. It is more constructive—and even necessary—to witness such work as an evolutionary step, however long and uncomfortable, to a new musical idiom that seeks the future, not only in form but in substance, an idiom that serves not only itself, but its audience as well.

Faith in the existence of such an idiom is largely the result of having heard, last January, the New York premiere of "Rituel," by Pierre Boulez, who has recently completed his last season as music director and conductor of the New York Philharmonic. Boulez, who began composing in the late Forties, has explored the possibilities of modern music in his composing and



critical writing with a surpassing musical intelligence and artistic integrity. His music is rarely played in this country, and we suffer for it; his compositions, though few in number, almost alone continue to confirm the promise of modern music.

"Rituel" is memorial music (to Bruno Maderna, an Italian composer-conductor and a close friend of Boulez's who died in 1973), but it is also much more. It deals concretely, and with no lack of emotion, with beginnings, with endings, with possibilities, and with how these concepts define existence and its continuity. The music is structurally complex and thematically profound. It pushes forward (as have most of Boulez's works) the current boundaries of mainstream music in its aural, philosophical, and emotional aspects.

"Rituel" lasts somewhat less than a half hour and employs fifty-one musicians. These are divided into eight instrumental groups, made up as follows: one oboe, two clarinets, three flutes, four violins, five mixed woodwinds, six strings (violins, violas, and cellos), seven mixed woodwinds, and fourteen brass. Playing with each group, except the brass, is a percussionist. Each of these seven percussionists has seven instruments, many African and Asian in origin. Two additional percussionists form what might be called a ninth group. Their instruments are seven gongs and seven tam-tams, and they are placed in back of the orchestra.

The music is divided into fifteen sections of varying length. The seven odd-numbered sections are given over to chordal progressions. The progression is additive: there is one chord in section one, two chords in section three, and three chords in section five, continuing until the thirteenth section has seven chords. The chordal sounds are played by the brass, which are centrally stationed in the orchestra, and which perform only in the odd-numbered sections. (The seven other playing groups are situated in discrete clusters so that the timbre of each remains clear.) The chordal sections are introduced by a gong played by the separate percussion duo. The metronomic sounds of its gongs and tam-tams are heard throughout these sections; the resulting rhythms, though independent of the rest of the music, serve as a master clock for the piece,

structuring and illuminating the musical activity.

The even-numbered sections are polyphonic and somewhat aleatoric. Their music contains slow, elegiac suggestions played against fleeting sounds of different tempos. All combine to suggest both ceremony (the "ritual") and the random pulses of activity (memories, perhaps, or thoughts, or varying emotions) that arise in us when we perform or take part in a ceremony. The music in these sections is played by all the instrumental groups except the brass. The seven groups are brought in successively—only the single oboe plays in section two, and by section twelve, all instruments are heard. Beginning with section five, the brass, after giving out the chordal themes, are joined by whatever instrumental groups have played in the preceding section, a further additive element that continues for the rest of the piece.

The fifteenth part, coming after seven chordal sections have alternated with an equal number of polyphonic intervals, is a lengthy, contemplative reprise. In slow succession, the instrumental groups cease playing; the music dissipates to a final E-flat tone; a gong shimmers around the close.

The complex polyrhythmic structure of "Rituel" is such that in addition to the orchestra conductor (Boulez himself in the Philharmonic concerts), the percussionist assigned to each of the first seven instrumental clusters acts as an autonomous subconductor for his group; he keeps time with his instruments in the polyphonic, even-numbered sections after receiving his starting cue from the chief conductor. (The chordal sections are conducted by the main conductor.) Each group begins its playing in these polyphonic sections in a staggered sequence freely chosen by the orchestra conductor. The duration of the material here varies not only from group to group but also among the instruments within each group; thus the interior structure of "Rituel" will shift somewhat with every performance, adding to it a unique element of constant, if limited, change.

The sound of "Rituel" is infinitely diverse. Its fifteen sections may be heard as a funereal procession that starts, stops, and starts again, according to the beats of the gongs and tam-tams. Enclosed within this musical

time structure the orchestra plays long sounds followed by shorter ones. These are not melody—not the forceful sadness we hear in the processional Allegretto of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, nor the slow, lyrical farewell in the Adagio of Mahler's Ninth. Compared to "Rituel," such music contains offered emotion—proud lamentation in one and regretful parting in the other. In that sense, "Rituel" offers no forceful emotion of its own. Its sound, being without melodic pillars or ongoing musical phrases, is more the music of suggestion than statement. The brass chords, the quick excursions by the strings, the slightly hidden utterances of the woodwinds and the percussive lines beneath them, all played against the implacable metronomic gongs and tam-tams, can be heard as the fragments of sentences by one who has too much to say in too short a space.

In its minor rhythms set against the percussive major cadence, "Rituel" creates for itself a space—an architecture—that surrounds the music. It is without fanfares or crescendos; its tonality is essentially quiet. Almost explicit in "Rituel" is the function of silence, not merely as musical rests but as a condition equal to sound. One is aware here not only of the music, but of the idea that it emanates from silence and must fall back into it. We also have a clear sense of how "Rituel" progresses through time and musical distance. Though the music repeatedly comes back on itself in continuously altered form, like gentle waves on a beach, the whole also moves perceptibly. If music has a geometry, then "Rituel" is a sphere revolving imperfectly around itself as it moves through the ceremony it observes.

**R**ITUEL" IS MUSIC that keeps its distance. Far from confronting us in the manner of other modernist composers or the Romantics before them, this work suggests only that we enter into it, and, given its rhythmic motion, we move toward it almost involuntarily. We join it as we might a passing parade or procession if we had the time and nowhere else to go. We enter the ritual and observe its form. We take in and consider its thoughts, its bits of memory, sorrows and joys, things undertaken and



completed, things unfulfilled that will present themselves again. The ritual becomes the listener's, for it is a meditation, and, ultimately, it is the listener who meditates and who invests. "Rituel" with his own emotion. It is the most private of music, belonging separately and in a different way to each who hears it.

In the beginning of his six years with the New York Philharmonic, Boulez attempted to program more modern and avant-garde music than Philharmonic listeners had heard before. The audiences rejected both the new music and Boulez. In the end, so did most of the critics, including the

chief critic for the *New York Times*, who called Boulez, together with his music, dry, unemotional, and too "intellectual."

We still have Boulez as a composer, one of the greatest of our time and surely the most visionary. The Philharmonic has not scheduled any of his music for New York's 1977-78 season, but the Schwann catalogue lists six of his compositions as currently available on records. Columbia has recorded "Rituel" in London. When asked about the release date, a company spokesman said the record would be released later this year. A few days later, he called back to say that the release would be

sometime in 1978. Later, he called back again to say that Columbia had no release date planned. The problem it seemed, was that "Rituel" would take up only one side of a disc, and the company could not determine what should be put on the flip side.

In the meantime, Boulez has gone back to France, where he is director of the Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique-Musique. The new institute brings together scientists and musicians in a multidisciplinary approach to musical problems. Boulez has told friends that he also intends to compose more.

HARPER'S/JUNE 1977

### Recommended Recordings

**Beethoven: Symphony no. 7** (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 706). Carlos Kleiber, the Vienna Philharmonic, and Deutsche Grammophon have combined their talents in a recording that is absolutely extraordinary. The tautness of Kleiber's line, the richness of the orchestra's sound, and Deutsche Grammophon's sonic fidelity make this performance as nearly perfect in all respects as one could ask for. Kleiber has mined completely the enormous emotional lode of this symphony without producing a single cloying note. Every performer sounds like a soloist in a record that is a masterpiece of clarity, presence, and dynamic range.

**Dmitri Shostakovich: Symphony no. 14** (Recorded in the Soviet Union by Melodiya, distributed in the United States by Columbia M-34507). Mstislav Rostropovich conducts an ensemble of Moscow Philharmonic soloists, together with Galina Vishnevskaya, soprano, and Mark Reshetin, bass. Less a symphony than a song cycle orchestrated for strings and percussion, this work was first performed in 1969. The songs are from the texts of eleven poems by Federico García Lorca, Guillaume Apollinaire, Wilhelm Karlovich Küchelbecker, and Rainer Maria Rilke; all are about unnatural death (in war, in prison, by suicide) in what many take for an angry lament by Shostakovich on Soviet excesses. His music amplifies and enriches the poetry of desolation and despair, and it is among the most haunting and powerful art this century has produced. Technically, the recording is somewhat lacking, but this

is a minor fault against the intense playing and the heavy fullness of the Russian voices. A text to the poems is supplied.

**Dmitri Shostakovich: Symphony no. 5** (Angel S-37279). In 1936 Shostakovich, at the height of his early success, fell afoul of the Russian watchdogs of the arts and was denounced for "bourgeois" innovations. He offered the Fifth Symphony as his "answer to just criticism" and was promptly rehabilitated. The work is broad and melodic, and much of it, especially the first movement, is both beautiful and strong. Oddly, the last movement, supposed to convey triumph and uplift, is anemic and unconvincing. But it is music worth listening to, both for itself and as a contrast to his more brooding work. The performance here is by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paavo Berglund, and it is a fine one.

**Bach: Organ Works, vols. 1 and 2** (Angel S-37264; S-37265). Volume 1, played on the organ of the Sorö Monastery Church, Denmark, contains seven fantasias; *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor* (BWV. 542); *Fantasia and Fugue in C minor* (BWV. 537); *Fantasia in G* (BWV. 572); *Fantasia in C* (BWV. 570); *Fantasia con imitazione in B minor* (BWV. 563); *Fantasia in C minor* (BWV. 562); *Fantasia in C minor* (no BWV. listing). Volume 2, played on the organ of St. Peter's Cathedral in Geneva, has four toccatas: *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* (BWV. 565); *Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C*

(BWV. 564); *Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Dorian)* (BWV. 538); *Toccata and Fugue in F* (BWV. 540). Lione Rogg is the organist in these splendid recordings.

**George Crumb: Makrokosmos, vol. 2. Twelve Fantasy-Pieces after the Zodiac for Amplified Piano** (Columbia/Odyssey Y34135). By using paper, glass tumblers, a microphone suspended over the strings, and a percussionist's wire brush, Crumb has expanded the variety of piano sounds into orchestral proportions. Like *Makrokosmos, vol. 1*, this is music that should be approached with an open spirit. The reward is music of different moods, dynamics, and colors that continues to please and to stimulate after repeated listenings. Robert Miller's pianistic gifts are resplendent in this record.

**Olivier Messiaen: Quartet for the End of Time** (RCA Red Seal ARL1-1567). Messiaen, who combined in his music a reverence for nature with a deep religious mysticism, wrote "Quartet for the End of Time" while a prisoner in Silesia in World War II. Lack of food, he said, caused hallucinations and nightmares that gave rise to this work (its first performance was in the prison). This moving composition is full of images of an oppressed and victorious faith and the trilling of birds (a sound that Messiaen loved). The brilliant and deeply felt performance is by the young quartet that calls itself Tashi: Peter Serkin, piano; Ida Kavafian, violin; Fred Sherry, cello; Richard Stoltzman, clarinet.



# THE REVISIONIST HISTORY BOOK CLUB NEWSLETTER

by Stephen Darst

The Revisionist History Book Club is pleased to announce that the Club's full selection for April will be The Court-Martial of St. Francis of Assisi. This full-dress reevaluation of the Dark Age "saint" is the work of George Strong, author of the Club's 1975 blockbuster, Frame-Up in Paradise: "Killer" Cain Exonerated.

To sparrows, a good friend. To deer, a boon companion. Maybe. But to starving Crusaders foraging in the woods near Assisi for life-sustaining food, "Saint" Francis was a raving bigot, more interested in "his birds" than in his fellowman. Author Strong asks history's tantalizing "what-ifs???". What if St. Francis had been brought to the bar of military justice for snatching pigeons from the pots of ravenous soldiers? What if St. Francis was not the kind, gentle animal-lover of legend but was rather a ruthless exploiter of all living creatures, condescending to squirrels he had known all his life, unfailingly caustic with doves, a man who had no time for oxen and those he considered "dumb beasts"?

In the gripping courtroom cross-examination scene that climaxes The Court-Martial, St. Francis is forced to reveal his interest in a Genoa warehouse stock-piled with venison. \$8.95

## April Alternate Selections:

### Scarface: Another View

The received wisdom on "Scarface" Al Capone is clear enough: the most blood-thirsty, rapacious, wanton killer and mobster in American history. Or was he? Using information only recently unearthed plus records of the Capone "family," Prof. Horace Dunham demolishes the case against Capone. Yet at the outset of his investigation Professor Dunham was a confirmed "alophobe." Not so now, he says.

"By the time I had finished sifting through the so-called evidence against Scarface I became convinced that he was innocent--not only of the income-tax charges that sent him to prison but innocent of any wrongdoing whatsoever. The Capone I have managed to piece together was, in truth, a matchless civic asset, a dignified, rather plumpish, slightly reserved gentleman with a fondness for old port who dozed over Cavalcanti by the fire. No one bothers to point out that Capone received that saber scar in a duel at the University of Chicago when a fellow student used the familiar tu in conversation with Al."

What caused Professor Dunham to change his mind?

"Quite simply, the 'case' against him was too perfect," he says. "Numbers, narcotics, extortion, murder, arson, bribery, perjury, hijacking, rumrunning, white slavery--it all fit together too nicely."

Dunham traces Capone's troubles to his misuse of the quotation mark.

"I am seeking 'work' to help support my 'family,'" young Al wrote to the movers and shakers of Chicago upon graduation from college. "Any 'help' you can 'give me' will be 'appreciated.'"

His letters drew an immediate response:

"We sympathize greatly with your request for 'work' to support your 'family.' Enclosed you will find tangible 'assistance.' Hope you 'appreciate' our 'cooperation.' If we can again be of 'service' let us know. Love to 'family.'"

Al mindlessly pocketed the money, which came to \$375,000. Was he naive? Undoubtedly. Stupid? Perhaps. But guilty in a court of law? No, says Professor Dunham and we think you will agree when you finish Scarface: Another View. \$9.95

### White Elephant, Black Name

Benedict Arnold came within an eyelash of disposing of one of real-estate history's great white elephants, the Military Academy at West Point. If blundering farm boys had not happened upon Major André before he could swallow architects' renderings for the West Point Shopping Center and Mall, the fledgling Revolutionary Army would have gotten top dollar for a costly and useless parcel encumbered by crippling zoning restrictions. As George Washington (in on it from the start) said, "Everyone would have seen some money." As it was, Washington was forced to reject the application for rezoning and charge Arnold with treason. Anyone who has ever seen a "perfect" deal fall through will be fascinated with this one. \$11.95

## In coming months:

The Horse Who Would Be Consul (When Roman Emperor Caligula named his horse, Incitatus, to the position of consul, critics howled. The last laugh belongs to Incitatus, one of the great consuls of Roman history, wise, just, and farsighted, a true philosopher-king-horse); Where There's Smoke (St. Joan of Arc and her all-too-real, made-in-England witches); The St. Simeon Stylites Exercise Book (Slimmer hips in a telephone booth through this illustrated guide); The Laity's Not for Burning (Torquemada's confidential notes reveal that the infamous grand inquisitor, far from ordering the autos-da-fé of the Inquisition, favored work-release, conjugal visitation, halfway-house programs, and a grievance committee for heretics and ex-heretics).



## SINS OF OMISSION

The media as censor

by Eugene McCarthy

**F**REEDOM OF THE PRESS is an extension of the right of freedom of speech. And freedom of speech is a derived right, based not on the right of anyone to say anything he wishes to say, under any circumstances, but rather on the need for information and for truth. Since no man is sure of what the truth is, the best practical way of developing an understanding and knowing society is to let those who have something to say say it or write it, so that seekers of the truth may accept or reject it.

Lyndon Johnson is reported to have told Spiro Agnew after the 1968 election, "Young man, we have in this country two big television networks, NBC and CBS. We have two newsmagazines, *Newsweek* and *Time*. We have two wire services, AP and UPI. We have two pollsters, Gallup and Harris. We have two big newspapers, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. They're all so damned big they think they own the country. But, young man, don't get any ideas about fighting." The possibility for controlling the news exists, and the fulfillment of Oswald Spengler's judgment impends. For, as he wrote in *The Decline of the West*, "It is permitted to

everyone to say what he pleases, but the Press is free to take notice of what he says or not. It can condemn 'truth' to death simply by not undertaking its communication to the world—a terrible censorship of silence, which is all the more potent in that masses of newspaper readers are absolutely unaware that it exists."

The press today proceeds largely as though there were a free and competitive flow of information in the country, like that of 150 years ago, when, because of technological limitations, the largest daily newspaper run was limited to about 5,000 papers a day.

Of course the media cannot report all the news. They must be selective, but there are standards for selection. Certainly the media do not have the right to suppress news they do not want the public to know about.

There are, I think, at least four rules of selection which the media can and should apply. First, if someone is talking or writing nonsense, and it is irrelevant nonsense, there is no obligation to spread the word. Second, if someone is talking nonsense and having an ef-

*Former Sen. Eugene McCarthy was an independent candidate for President in 1976.*

fect, the press has, I believe, as a monopoly or near monopoly, an obligation to report the nonsense. It can and should challenge it with counterinformation and analysis. Thus I think the press and the electronic media had an obligation to report, as they did, the campaign of George Wallace. Third, if someone is speaking sense and having an effect, there is obviously an obligation to report it. And fourth, if someone is saying things that do make sense, and that have relevance to current problems, even though there is no immediate evidence that what is being said is having any significant effect, these things should be reported. It is in this fourth case that the failure of the press is most evident.

**T**HE SPENGLER PROPHECY was identified and described in a recent opinion by Judge George E. MacKinnon of the U.S. Court of Appeals on access of candidates to television audiences. MacKinnon noted the argument of CBS that "a broadcaster is only required to make reasonable judgments in good faith as to the significance of a particular ca-





late and so to decide how much time could be devoted to coverage of his campaign activities." MacKinnon then commented as follows:

Thus, the broadcasters start by determining how significant a particular candidate is. If they determine that he is not significant, then the amount of publicity he receives is greatly reduced—he may be effectively "frozen out" from any substantial news coverage during the entire campaign.

If the media had followed a different course and considered that the candidate was significant and if the media had given his campaign the same amount of coverage as it did to other candidates, his candidacy might have become of greater "significance" and the candidate might have gone on to win, or to become a serious contender.

But under present practices, as outlined by CBS, a candidate is doomed at the very beginning to having his personal significance as a candidate judged by the broadcasters practically before he ever starts his campaign. Thereafter the coverage of the issues he raises is correspondingly greatly reduced, and as a candidate he is effectively frozen out of the political campaign by the media. While the present candidates, who are the appellants in this proceeding, may by general estimates be far removed from having any reasonable chance to win, the media can just as effectively, behind the screen of "news judgment," by exercising their claimed evaluation of a candidate's personal "significance," reduce its coverage of candidates who might have a chance to win, given fair coverage. And for CBS to argue that the petitioners have not "submitted any specific information to show that CBS's news judgments are unreasonable," merely compounds the error. Candidates whom the media freezes out from the beginning will practically never be able to demonstrate that the media's news judgments are unreasonable because they can never show how significant their campaign might have become if they had received fair coverage from the beginning for the issues they raised. Thus, the media's early "evaluation" becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The present campaign is a case in point. I venture to suggest that no person would contradict the statement that if one of the appel-

lants received half as much coverage as the candidates of the two principal parties his vote would be greatly increased.

The writing press in the 1976 election followed essentially the same policy as the broadcasters. When a Chicago newspaper columnist was asked to give some attention to an independent Presidential campaign, he responded, "I don't think we can fool around; beating Ford is too important." Silence and neglect of the independent challenge, which he thought might affect the outcome of the election, were his chosen methods.

In much the same way, Marshall Field rejected a challenge to the neglect of the same campaign by his *Chicago Sun-Times*, saying that the country is run by a two-party system and that "those candidates chosen by the people are the ones who deserve serious consideration." In countries with one-party politics, one can assume that press policy would be to give serious consideration to one party and its "candidates chosen by the people."

As well as worrying about threats to its freedom, the press should worry about whether it understands its function in a free society and whether or not it is performing that function well. The record of the press over the past twenty-five years is a record of serious failure on major social and political issues. Alfred Friendly, a veteran of the Joe McCarthy days, attempted in a recent issue of the *Washington Post* to explain, and to some extent excuse, the press for its part in building up Senator McCarthy and the whole anti-Communist, Cold War attitude of the early Fifties. It was a poor excuse. For the press in those years was eager to report almost every unproven charge and chal-

lenge—and not just to report it, but to headline it.

During the Vietnam war buildup, the press regularly accepted official handouts and reports of progress and success, and almost without question passed them on to the public. Most newspapers continued to support the war well into 1969.

The press, almost without exception, advocated the passage of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974, in which the Supreme Court found clear violations of freedom of speech and the separation of powers—and possible infringements on the right of privacy and freedom of assembly.

With few exceptions the newspapers supported legislation to provide for a volunteer Army. They now support, without much critical evaluation, every proposal to reform Congress, without regard for the bearing of such laws on free and open politics.

Because of the televised debates, the print media's function in the 1976 Presidential campaign consisted largely of commenting on what was on television. Yet newspapers supported the idea of the debates and accepted the device of calling them news events sponsored by the League of Women Voters, thereby exempting them from the equal-time provisions of the Federal Communications Act. Walter R. Mears, one of the panel of reporters for the Vice-Presidential debates, writing in a recent issue of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, said:

*There was a clear effort to play down the true nature of the debates, which were, after all, television programs. Karayn's [the director of the programs or of the news events] instruction sheet counseled that the debate was to be called the event,*





"not broadcast, program or show."  
 ...The reason was simple: to get around equal-time rules, the debates had been billed as news events, open to TV coverage if the networks wanted to drop by. But the minute-by-minute time sheet, distributed in advance, covering seventy-five minutes and fifteen seconds, made clear that it was what it was—a broadcast, program, or show.

It is fair to ask why the networks, the League of Women Voters, and finally the responsible free press all participated in an obvious evasion of the equal-time provisions of the Federal Communications Act.

The only measurable contributions from the writing press during the campaign were the *Playboy* interview with Jimmy Carter and its dissemination, the exaggeration of the significance of Ford's confused statement about Communist influence in Poland, and the misleading New York *Daily News* headline "FORD TO N.Y.: DROP DEAD," which was used as the basis for at least one Carter television spot which had candidate Carter saying something to the effect that if elected he would not say to New York, "Drop Dead." Ford, of course had never said to New York, "Drop Dead."

**N**OW WITH THE ELECTION long over, the press is back to self-examination. Some of its in-house critics have suggested that perhaps independent and third-party candidates should have been given more attention. There is more talk of expanding letters-to-the-editor sections, and of making Op-Ed pages available for opinions not supported nor shared by editors or publishers. Beyond

the Op-Ed page and letters to the editors, there is always the *New York Times* suggestion that, when offended, one have lunch with the editors.

But not much will happen. Editors will feel better. Network news directors, whose consciences are easily quieted, will cease to worry about political coverage for another four years; then they will seek exemption from equal-time restrictions; if these maneuvers fail, they will respond to invitations like the League of Women Voters' invitation of the last campaign, and describe their participation as responses to a news event.

The press seems unaware of the relationship among all of the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. It seems unaware that a person or profession or institution protected by that bill has a very special responsibility to be concerned about the protection and enjoyment of the rights guaranteed to others. Churches, for example, which enjoy the protection guaranteed by freedom of religion cannot safely advocate restrictions of others' rights without endangering their own freedom. A political party protected by freedom of assembly should not interfere with the freedom of others to organize, nor with freedom of speech, nor with the press, unless it wishes to run the risk of endangering its own security under the law. Nor can the press, for the sake of its own freedom, safely be indifferent to interference with freedom of speech or assembly, the right of privacy, due process, or any other freedom guaranteed by the Constitution. But the press has been indifferent or careless. When the Supreme Court in 1976 held that the Federal Election Campaign Act violated freedom of speech, this fact was not headlined; rather, the prevailing

headlines were on the order of CATS PROTECTED BY SUPREME COURT.

The press also has been careless in passing judgment on its own methods. It generally accepted and approved methods of the *Washington Post* investigation of the Watergate even though the methods of the President's men and those of the *Post*'s differed only slightly. Thus we find the President's men used wiretaps; the *Post*'s men had persons listen on extension lines. The President's men used bugging devices; the *Post*'s men used eavesdropping and confidential sources. The President's men got information from the telephone company records by using the FBI; the *Post*'s men by using a telephone company source. The President and his men obstructed justice; the *Post*'s men indicated a willingness to tamper with grand jury. The President's men bugged and entered; the *Post*'s men used identification to get through on the telephone. The President's men examined files; the *Post*'s men examined papers on desk tops when not being watched. The President's men demanded money for silence or for "taking the rap." The *Post*'s men threatened to expose confidential sources to their superiors unless the sources told more. Both the President's men and the *Post*'s men justified their methods on the grounds that they were serving a higher purpose. Laurence Leamer, commenting on the *Post*'s Watergate investigation in his book *Living For Keeps*, says that "there was a big thing called legal justice and a small thing called journalistic justice."

Failure of the writing press to understand and meet its responsibility is especially serious. For the writing press is the principal means through which lines of thought and policy are developed and judgments made are called for within a reasonable range of time. The writing press still has more editors rather than news producers; it is not under technological pressure to produce the story and to provide instant analysis, as are the time-conscious media.

A newspaper may somewhat arrogantly assert that it prints "all the news that's fit to print." But no newspaper yet has been moved to declare, at the end of each edition, "That's the way it is," as Walter Cronkite does for five evenings a week.





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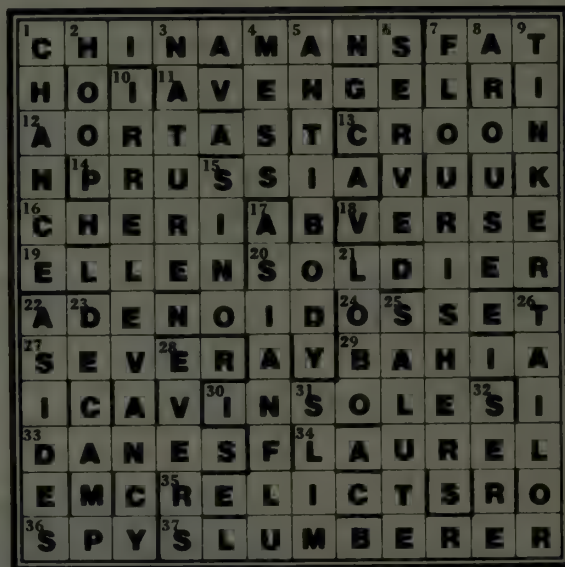
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#### Solution to the May Puzzle

#### Notes on "Theme and Variations"

The Theme-words are: **TINKER, EVERS, CHANCE** (baseball's great double-play triumvirate). The "Variations": for **TINKER**—TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY (John Le Carré's novel); for **EVERS**—SEVER, VERSE, SERVE (anagrams); for **CHANCE**—CHINAMAN's, FAT, SLIM (phrases ending with CHANCE).

**Across:** 11. anagram; 12. a-ort-as; 13. c(R.) o-on; 14. Pr(U.S.)sia; 16. hidden; 19. ell-en; 22. ad(l-one[reversal])d; 24. so(reversal)-set; 29. A(l)hab, reversal; 30. anagram; 33. (Su)Danes(e); 34. Laurel (Stan); 35. hidden; 37. s,-lumberer. **Down:** 2. reversal; 3. two meanings; 4. me(Anne)ss; 5. An(O-bit [reversal])dy; 7. flour-ishers; 8. anagram; 10. i(navel-err [reversal])cy; 15. sin-O; 17. pun, Asian flew; 25. anagram; 32. homonym.



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JUNE 1977

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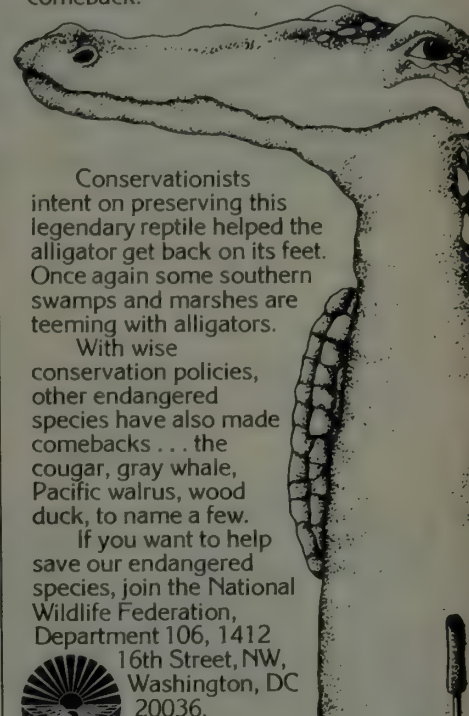
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# PUZZLE

## TITLE SEARCH

by Richard Maltby, Jr.

**This month's instructions:** The unclued "lights" (words entered in the diagram) at 1A, 13A, 21A, 31A, 1D, and 18D are related in that they are all 37A, 38A.

Clue answers include one acronym; 29A, 26D, and 35D are somewhat uncommon. As usual, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution.

The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 94.

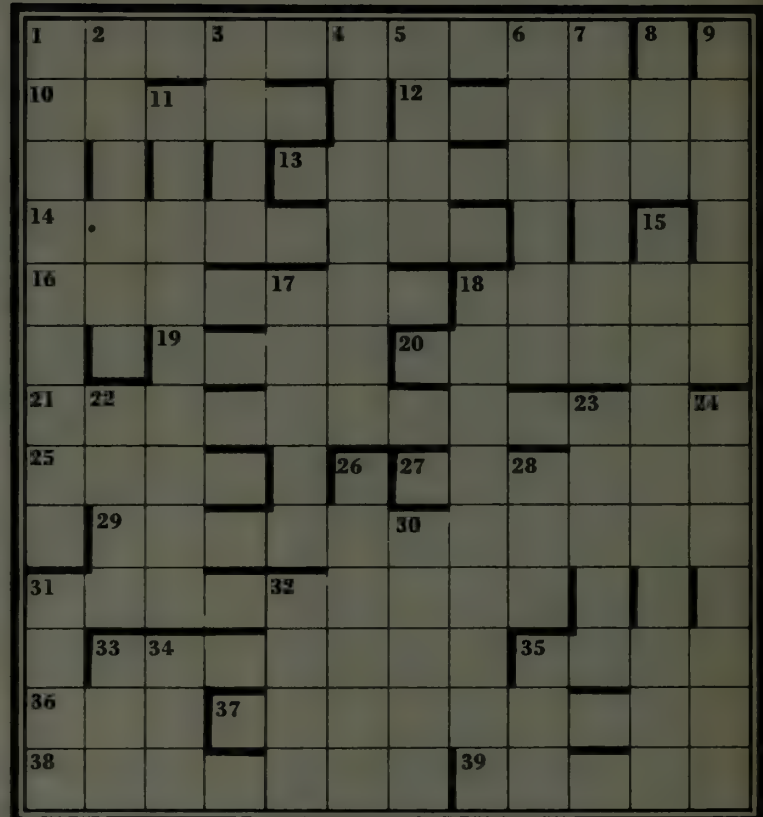
### CLUES

#### ACROSS

10. It's sighted on the way back from academia (5)
12. Tinman(!) has the ability to come close without one (6)
14. This kind of car won't go—or it won't stop! (8)
16. Running teams make a kind of kick in football (7)
18. Bond's boss retrieving a number of notes (5)
19. Over, even with negative feedback (4)
20. Unassuming kind of shirt styles in first place (6)
25. Put down, turn over, tune in (4)
27. In between, Tom begins to do grave work (6)
29. Soars if *Slap Shot* blooms (11)
33. Dirty song by Scott Joplin, but cleaner? (7)
35. Alliance one comes back to (4)
36. Sounds like the right time for us (3)
39. You're this if you show hit off on the road, briefly (5)

#### DOWN

2. Crying my head off is acting sick (6)
3. Listen to, listen to what an enthusiastic MP yells twice (4)
4. Some furniture ensconced in vessels (7)
5. Freezes offices (not on-going) (4)
6. United, reunited, divorced (6)
7. Catalyst for moving enemy around a small zone (6)



8. Gathering vegetable if there's time to finish (3)
9. From starrer, bad check (6)
11. Rap U.S. mail for distributing with a pouch (9)
15. Someone who puts his stamp on things is... a Ph.D. perhaps? (10)
17. Change does start something in precise amounts (5)
22. Ernest Hemingway's second-rate literature gets top mark (4)
23. Big vessel shows bad rot, a covering and a supporting (5)
24. ABCDs on letters to be retyped and run off (7)
26. I avert disaster—the eyes have them (6)
28. Pounds and pounds, French style (3)
30. Exploits banquet with only small change (5)
31. Golf clubs having died out have become courts (4)
32. The conclusion of a sestet—don't change it (4)
33. Couple in love... up, down, up... (3)
34. Upper-class nurse with a big pot (3)
35. For an Oriental actor, it's all work and this play! (3)

### CONTEST RULES

Send completed diagram with name and address to Title Search, Harper's Magazine, Two Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Entries must be received by June 10. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened will receive a one-

year subscription to *Harper's*. The solution will be printed in the July issue. Winners' names will be printed in the August issue. Winners of the April puzzle, "Headhunting," are Sari Magaziner, Scarsdale, New York; John R. Wiles, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Lion Gunnels, Phoenix, Arizona.







7-21

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